

About this series

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

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

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

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

July 21, 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today marks the six month anniversary of the first announcement of Covid-19 on U.S. soil. Since then, Covid has impacted nearly every facet of life around the world. From health, to work, to school, to civic engagement, the virus has catalyzed dramatic changes in the status quo. The Covid crisis has also highlighted and exacerbated pre-existing inequities in the U.S. economy, criminal justice, housing, education, and health care systems.

In the inaugural release of *Pandemic to Prosperity*, we look at the first six months of the pandemic in the United States to understand the initial impact of the virus, while laying the groundwork for the efforts needed to achieve a more prosperous future for all Americans. Future releases will track updates against these benchmarks and incorporate new data as the pandemic evolves.

Pandemic

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

- Indigenous, Black, and Hispanic/Latinx people are around 5 times more likely to be hospitalized due to Covid-19 than white individuals.
- While unemployment rates have improved since April, 19 states still had unemployment rates exceeding 10% in June.

Prosperity

High functioning governments and civic institutions will be crucial as we aim to build a more perfect union with well being for all post-pandemic.

Government

- Only 5 states—all in the Northeast—are currently making progress towards the White House Opening Up America Guidelines, with the majority of states either trending poorly or facing uncontrolled spread of the virus.
- At least 10 states are projecting fiscal year 2020 tax revenue reductions of 10% or more. In FY 2021, at least 26 states expect additional tax revenue reductions of 10% or more.
- In 6 states, 2020 Census self-response rates to date are below 56%, requiring extensive door-knocking to achieve a complete count.
- The majority of registered voters in 9 states who did not vote in 2016 cited structural issues such as polling place hours and accessibility challenges. Only 19 states are well-prepared for voting from home in the upcoming presidential election, despite increased barriers facing our potential voters due to Covid.

Institutions

- More than half of the counties in the United States are local news deserts with no or only one local newspaper, exacerbating a lack of reliable information during the pandemic.
- Roughly 1 in 4 households nationwide do not have internet access, hindering their ability to participate in remote learning, telehealth, and working from home.

People

- The share of adults with employment fell from a high of over 61% in January to 55% in June. While 55% of white adults had employment, only 51% of Black adults had employment as of June.
- More than 1 in 10 adults in the United States report not having enough food for their households during the pandemic.
- Nationwide, 1 in 4 adults is unlikely to be able to pay their rent or mortgage in August. In 10 states, this rate is even higher at 1 in 3 adults.

With the spread of Covid-19 increasing nationwide, and unemployment at 11.1%—higher than at the peak of the Great Recession—the virus has taken a terrible toll on both lives and livelihoods in the last six months. Federal stimulus packages are nearing the end of their anticipated lifecycle, and many small businesses are struggling to survive in the new pandemic reality. With expanded federal unemployment benefits slated to end this month, many renters and homeowners may be unable to pay for housing in the coming months. Communities may face a devastating wave of homelessness as eviction courts reopen. States vary greatly as to their ability to protect lives and livelihoods, support their most vulnerable, and prepare for safe and fair upcoming elections.

Pandemic to Prosperity provides baseline indicators to track progress as the nation struggles to simultaneously manage Covid, and build a more equitable future for all.

Pandemic Lives and Livelihoods

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

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

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

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

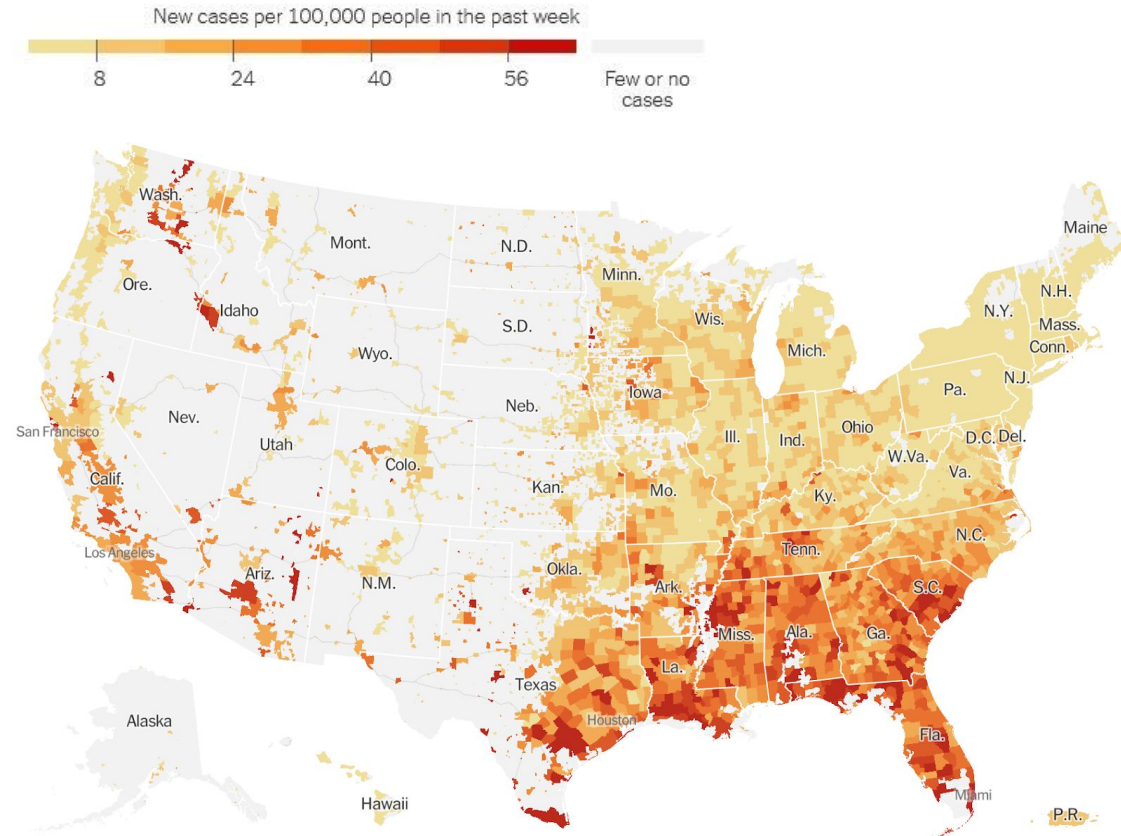
Indicators in this section

- New Covid cases in past week
- Age-adjusted Covid-19-associated hospitalization rates
- Unemployment rates

Hotspots for the virus have emerged in the Southeast and West coast, with some evidence of stabilization in the Northeast.

New Covid cases per 100,000 people in past week, by county

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



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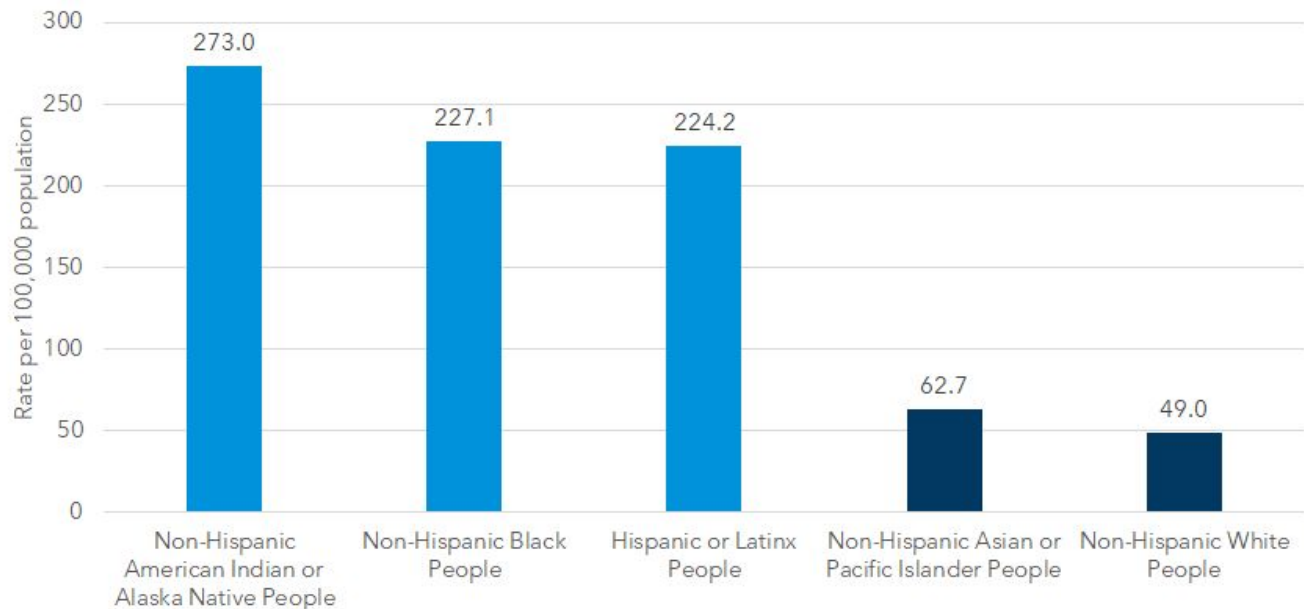
With the expansion of diagnostic testing nationwide in recent weeks, the rate of new cases now represents the most valid and immediate indicator of Covid's spread. Both hospitalization and death rates—while important measures of impact—lag weeks or months after initial diagnosis and fail to capture the full magnitude of the pandemic.¹ However, epidemiologists warn that in the absence of widespread random sampling of the population, we will not know the true scale of the pandemic, and will not be able to optimally manage the crisis. The hotspots of new cases over the last two weeks are troubling, and only represent perhaps 20% or less of the actual infection rate.^{2,3}

Even though data on new cases primarily represents individuals who are symptomatic or are known to have come into contact with someone who was Covid-positive, the patterns are nonetheless stark. Texas, Oklahoma, and 9 southeastern states are experiencing extraordinarily high rates of infection, while record case incidence is also seen in California and Arizona. At the same time, states including Idaho, Washington, Minnesota, Nevada, Kentucky, and Iowa are attributing isolated flare-ups to spread in group quarters such as correctional facilities and nursing homes, and failure to social distance.^{4,5,6,7,8} States including California and Oregon are rolling back reopening plans due to surges in caseload.⁹

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

Age-adjusted Covid-19-associated hospitalization rates, March 1-July 11, 2020

By race and ethnicity



Source: [CDC](#)

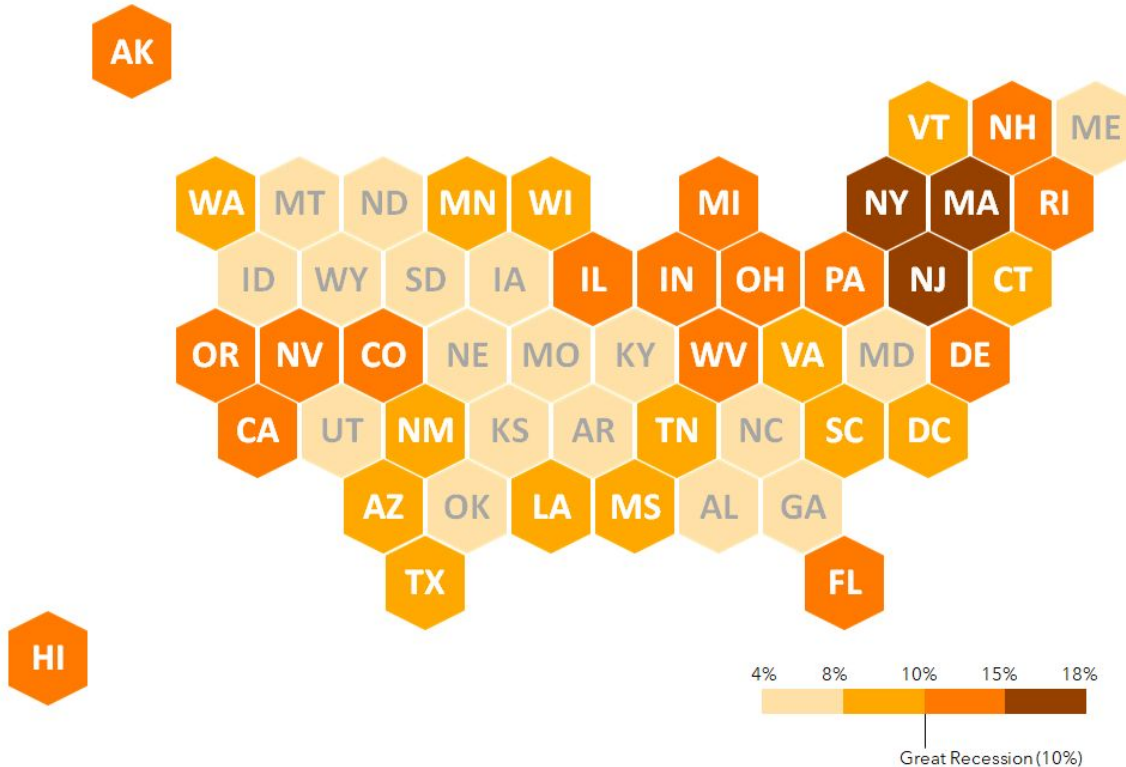
Despite ongoing debates about the quality and completeness of data on Covid cases reported by hospitals,¹ available data on hospitalizations nonetheless illuminates stark disparities between racial groups. American Indian/Alaska Native, African American, and Hispanic/Latinx individuals are respectively 5.6, 4.6, and 4.6 times more likely to have severe Covid impacts than white people.

Racial disparities in health outcomes have existed long before Covid, but only partially explain the divide in this pandemic. Emerging research points to occupational exposure as a key driver of higher infection rates.² Populations of color most impacted by Covid are over-represented in front-line work such as agriculture, food processing, transportation, janitorial work, and caregiving, and thus are not granted the privilege of working from home.^{3,4,5} Plus the cumulative health impacts of living in unsafe neighborhoods, breathing polluted air, having less access to healthy foods or quality medical care, and a lifetime experiencing racial discrimination mean that those populations have higher rates of comorbidities such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity that are associated with greater morbidity and mortality in Covid cases.^{6,7,8,9} For example, baseline rates of diabetes are nearly 15% among Native Americans, 13% for Hispanics, and 12% for Black Americans, compared to 8% for white Americans according to the CDC's 2020 National Diabetes Statistics Report.¹⁰

As of June 2020, unemployment remains above 10% in 19 states. In Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York more than 15% of the workforce was actively looking for work in June.

Unemployment rate by state, June 2020

Percent of labor force who have actively sought work in the past 4 weeks



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov)

The pandemic, of course, has had both health and economic impacts. Though there was a slight rebound between April (14.7%) and June (11.1%), the national unemployment rates for June exceeds the highest levels in recent history, including the Great Recession (10%) and the recession in the early 2000s (6.3%).¹ As of June, 19 states have unemployment rates that exceed 10%.

Compared with 2019 when monthly unemployment was at or below 4% nationally, unemployment rates are now staggeringly high.¹ However, unemployment rates are an incomplete measure of those who may be struggling to make ends meet. Unemployment rates measure only those actively looking for work. They fail to account for those workers who have become discouraged and dropped out of the labor force completely—the ranks of which have swelled since the Great Recession.² Additionally, in the case of May unemployment rates, many people may have been misclassified as employed who were actually temporarily laid off due to Covid shutdowns.³ This misclassification continued in June but to a lesser degree.⁴

Prosperity

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

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

Government

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

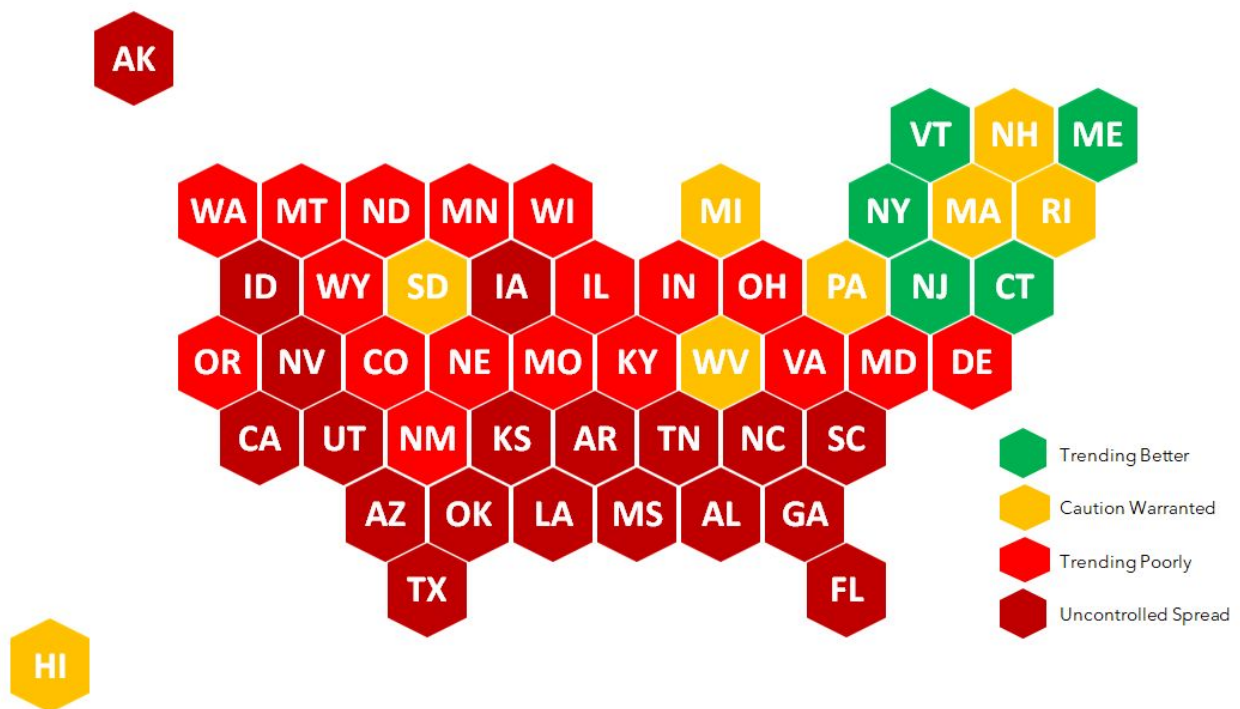
Indicators in this section

- Progress toward White House Opening Up America Again Guidelines
- Paycheck Protection Program loans per capita
- FY 2020 and 2021 preliminary estimates of decline in tax revenues
- 2020 Census self-response rates
- Reasons for not voting in the 2016 election
- Readiness to vote in a pandemic

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

Progress toward White House *Opening Up America Again* Guidelines

As of July 19, 2020



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

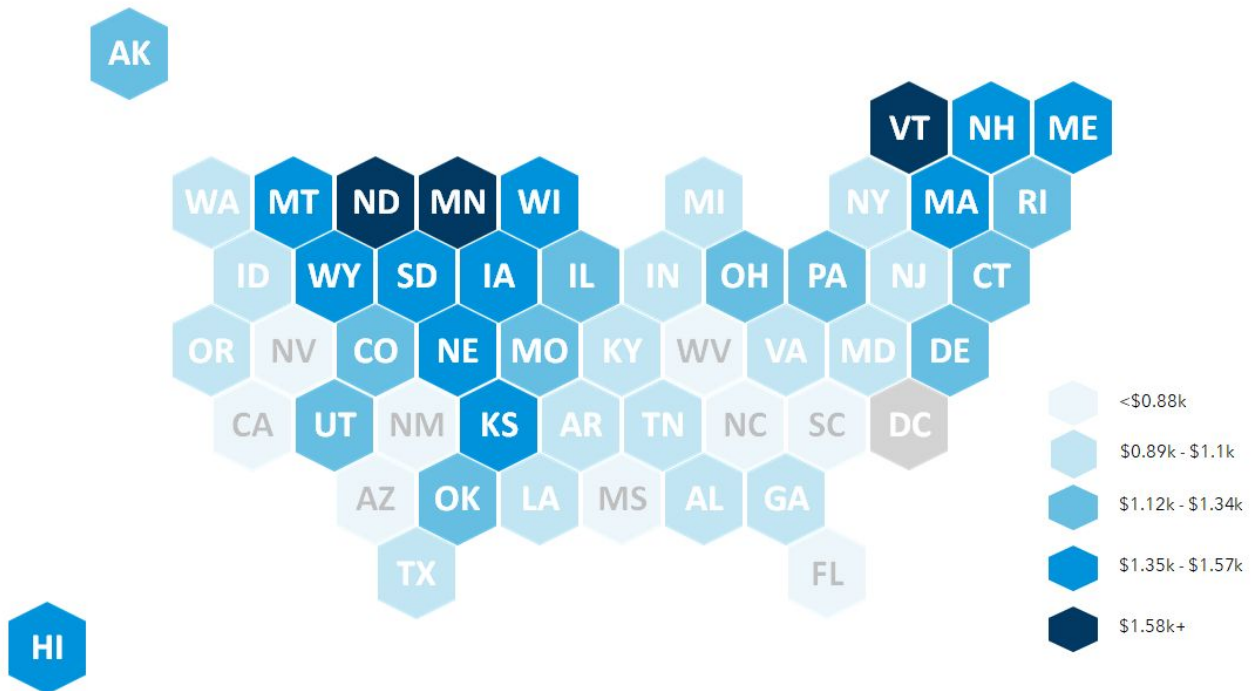
The White House Opening Up America Guidelines set criteria for reopening based on trajectory of new cases, hospital capacity, and degree of testing.¹ The CDC recently stopped publishing data on hospital capacity while HHS implements a new reporting system.² This is making it harder to assess how states are doing relative to the White House gating criteria. As of July 19, only 5 states (CT, NJ, NY, VT, and ME) are currently meeting these minimal criteria while 19 are categorized as having “uncontrolled spread.” In the absence of a vaccine or effective treatment, public health measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, and widespread testing are essential for managing the pandemic.

Though the guidelines are federal, the responsibility for testing and rules on social distancing fall to state and local governments. Effective state and local public health measures require both the trust of constituents and the collective will to adopt science-based practices such as avoiding crowded internal venues or wearing masks.³ A June survey by Pew found a tepid 53% of adults believe that their governor or state gets their Covid information right almost all or most of the time.⁴ Nonetheless, 38 states plus the District of Columbia now have some form of mandatory mask requirement.⁵ According to a recent Gallup poll, nearly three-quarters of Americans are wearing masks “always or very often” when in public, though adoption varies by region and by demographics and political party identification.⁵

North Dakota, Vermont, and Minnesota received the largest amount of CARES Act forgivable small business loans per capita.

Paycheck Protection Program loans per capita

CARES Act small business loan dollars per capita, initial \$350 billion



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

Many complex factors have contributed to the distribution of the Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loans. Notably, this state-by-state analysis includes only the first \$350 billion distributed, which amounted to a first come first served scramble that exhausted the funds in only 14 days.¹ In June, Congress approved an additional \$310 billion to the program. But nearly \$130 billion remained available as of July 10, 2020.²

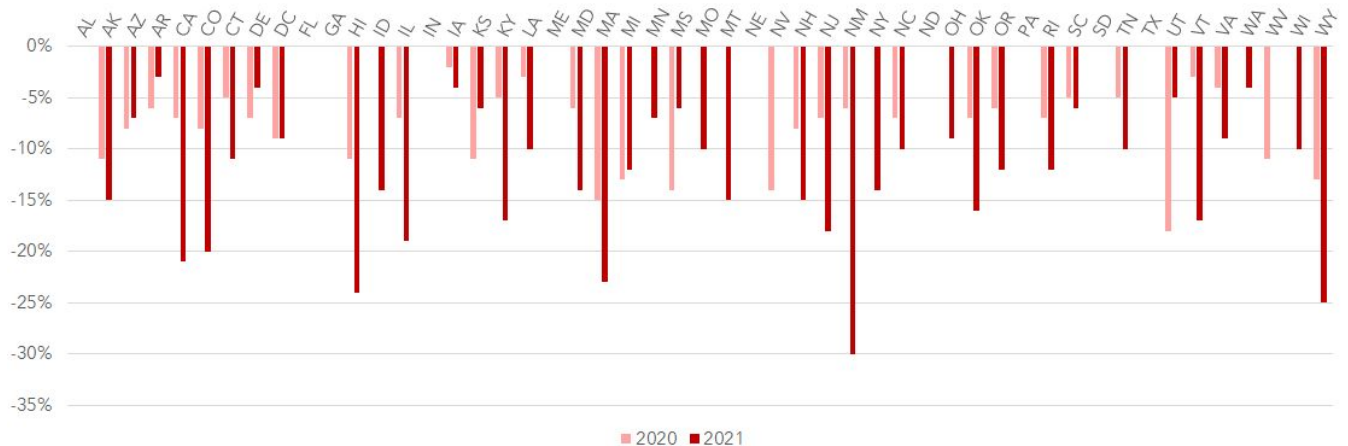
In early July, the SBA released the names of all companies and organizations that had received loans of \$150,000 or more. These larger dollar loans accounted for the vast majority (72.8%) of the dollars dispersed, and news reports have highlighted those larger recipients that are already well-capitalized—not the intended target of the program.^{3,4} However, 87% of all loans made were for less than \$150,000 and may have gone to the small local businesses that arguably most need support in surviving the pandemic.⁵

More data is needed on these smaller recipients to fully understand the impact of the program in supporting small businesses struggling to survive during Covid shutdowns—shutdowns that likely will come in waves as infection rates rise and fall.

At least 10 states are projecting tax revenue reductions of 10% or greater for the fiscal year 2020, increasing to at least 26 states for FY 2021.

FY 2020 and 2021 preliminary estimates of decline in tax revenues by state, as of June 15

Percent decline in tax revenues



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

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

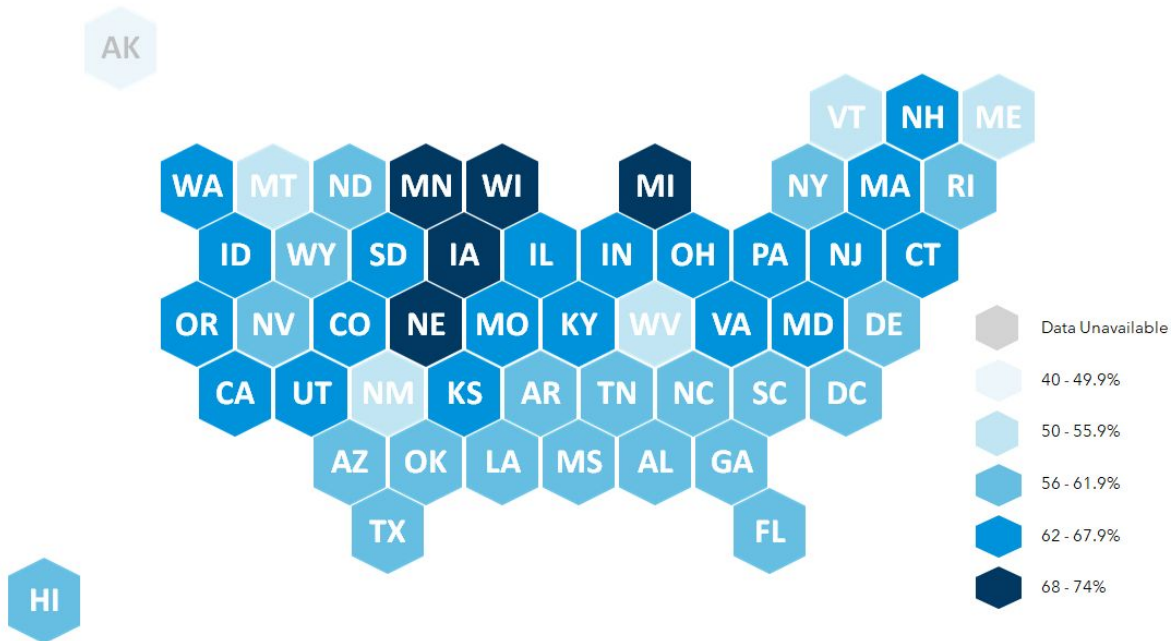
The economic crisis spurred by Covid hits states directly, in terms of reduced income and sales taxes. The disparate impacts of the pandemic on industries such as tourism and oil & gas hit states' finances as well. Hardest hit this year will be Utah with an 18% projected reduction due in large part to declining corporate revenues and fuel use and Massachusetts with a 15% reduction spurred by faltering tourism and business activity.^{1,2} For fiscal year 2021, 26 states are projecting a tax revenue reduction of 10% or greater. Energy-producing states such as New Mexico and Wyoming are projecting declines of 30% and 25% respectively driven by losses oil & gas.^{3,4} Hawai'i and Massachusetts, projecting losses of 24% and 23%, respectively, are both heavily dependent on tourism.^{8,2}

This revenue loss for states will have an impact on the essential services they provide such as education, disaster preparedness and response, public spaces, and parks.⁵ More troubling is the impact these reductions could have on the state's ability to mount a robust public health response to Covid.⁶ For example, recent NPR survey of states found that only 7 states plus DC are appropriately staffed for contact tracing.⁷

ERRATA: (7/22/20) An earlier version of this analysis stated in error that WY has a 20% projected decline in 2021, rather than 25%.

Delays in census operations increase risk that some states may have more complete counts than others, with a gap of 23 percentage points between the current highest (MN) and lowest (AK) self-response rates.

2020 Census self-response rates
As of July 15, 2020



Source: [CUNY Hard to Count Map](#) analysis of [Census Self-Response Rate data](#)

The timing of this pandemic was unfortunate for the Census—a constitutionally-mandated count of all persons every ten years. The census form asks about all persons living in each household in the United States (which includes Puerto Rico and territories) on April 1, 2020—a date that fell just as Covid consumed the nation’s news cycles. The census determines the apportionment of congressional seats, the redrawing of voting districts, and the distribution of federal funds. This census was already expected to be a difficult one, with record-high levels of distrust in government, digital divide issues, and concerns that misinformation might depress response rates.¹

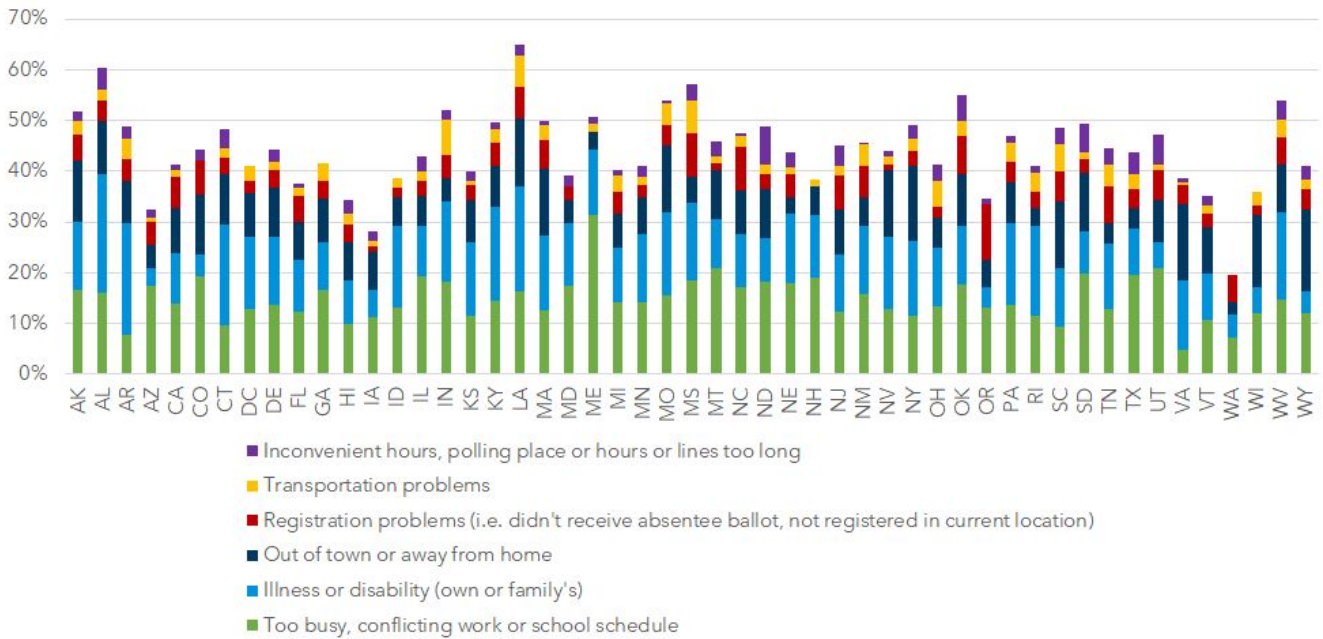
With a 23 percentage point spread between the highest (MN) and lowest (AK) state response rates, closing the gap by knocking on doors and having a physical presence in communities will be essential. Covid has delayed and complicated field operations, which are now slated to run through October.² Some states, such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, Nebraska, and Iowa are well-positioned to minimize the need for door-knocking with self-response rates above 68%. But states like New Mexico, Maine, West Virginia, Vermont, Montana, and Alaska have self-response rates below 56% and will require more census-takers to fill the gap.

Although 28 states have surpassed the Census Bureau’s anticipated national self-response rate of around 60.5%, the pandemic makes bringing that number up more important.³ Higher response rates mean fewer door knocks by census takers. State and local governments and community organizations have an urgent and essential role encouraging residents to respond by phone, mail, or online.

In 9 states, more than 50% of registered voters who didn't vote in 2016 cited structural reasons such as polling place hours, accessibility challenges, registration problems, or not being near polls on voting day.

Reasons for not voting in the 2016 election

Given by registered voters who did not vote



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

With the 2020 presidential election likely to be taking place under pandemic conditions, it is instructive to consider recent structural barriers for not voting and how those might be exacerbated by Covid. The 2016 presidential election had a turnout rate of 60% for eligible voters.¹

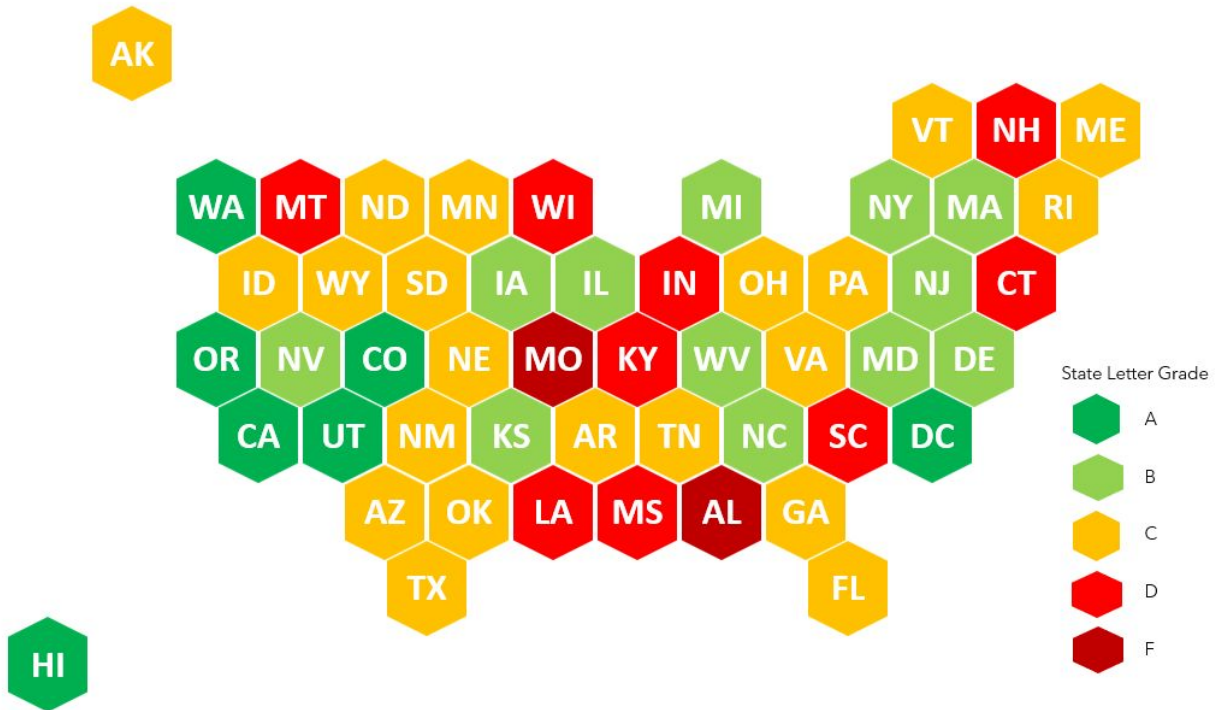
The most recent Current Population Survey asked why registered voters did not vote in that election. Their answers include a range of barriers that could dramatically reduce voter turnout during the Covid pandemic. For example, 1 in 3 registered voters in Maine who did not vote said it was because they had scheduling conflicts. This November, with many families juggling work and children being at home due to school and childcare closures, finding time to leave the house to vote may be even more difficult.

In 19 states, 10% or more of would-be voters indicated that they did not go to the polls because they were 'out of town or away from home,' a reason likely to be exacerbated by Covid-related displacement. In Alabama, 23% indicated that illness or disability kept them from the polls (concerns that may be amplified in a pandemic) and in Oregon, 11% of respondents had registration problems (which may be more challenging to fix due to reduced staffing/office hours in public buildings). Concerns about using public transportation, standing in line for long periods of time, and staffing at polling places could cause large numbers of people not to turn out for the 2020 presidential election if safe and secure alternatives for in-person voting are not in place and easily accessible.

With just over 3 months until the presidential election, 19 states are well-prepared for voting from home in the pandemic.

Readiness to vote by mail in a pandemic

As of July 15, 2020



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

Primary and other elections this spring were marred by postponements due to the pandemic, last-minute relocations of high-risk polling places like nursing homes, poll workers pulling out due to health concerns, long lines at the polls, and missing mail-in ballots.^{1,2,3} In addition to safe and adequately staffed in-person voting, the CDC recommends that election officials “consider offering alternatives to in-person voting if allowed in the jurisdiction.”⁴ Fortunately, many jurisdictions already have experience providing alternatives to in-person voting, with mail-in ballots accounting for 1 in 4 votes in the 2016 elections.⁵ Some jurisdictions had robust options for voting by mail in place before the pandemic, and some are making special accommodations.⁶

Brookings researchers designed a rubric for grading a state’s readiness for voting by mail in the pandemic.⁷ The rubric spans 14 criteria on requesting, completing, and submitting a mail-in ballot, with the focus on preparedness for the November election rather than permanent policies.⁸ Voting by mail not only makes voting itself safer in a pandemic, it also removes other barriers to voting exacerbated by the pandemic such as transportation challenges, not being at usual place of residence, caregiving responsibilities, and difficulty getting to the polls during open hours. States such as Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma with the largest shares of registered voters who cited structural barriers such as these for not voting in 2016, are also insufficiently prepared for voting from home.

Prosperity

Institutions

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

This inaugural issue of *Pandemic to Prosperity* focuses on the ability of people to access information they need to make informed decisions during a pandemic. We examine local news and internet access to assess the ability of communities to receive critical information and remain connected in a world that is dramatically more digital than just a few months ago.

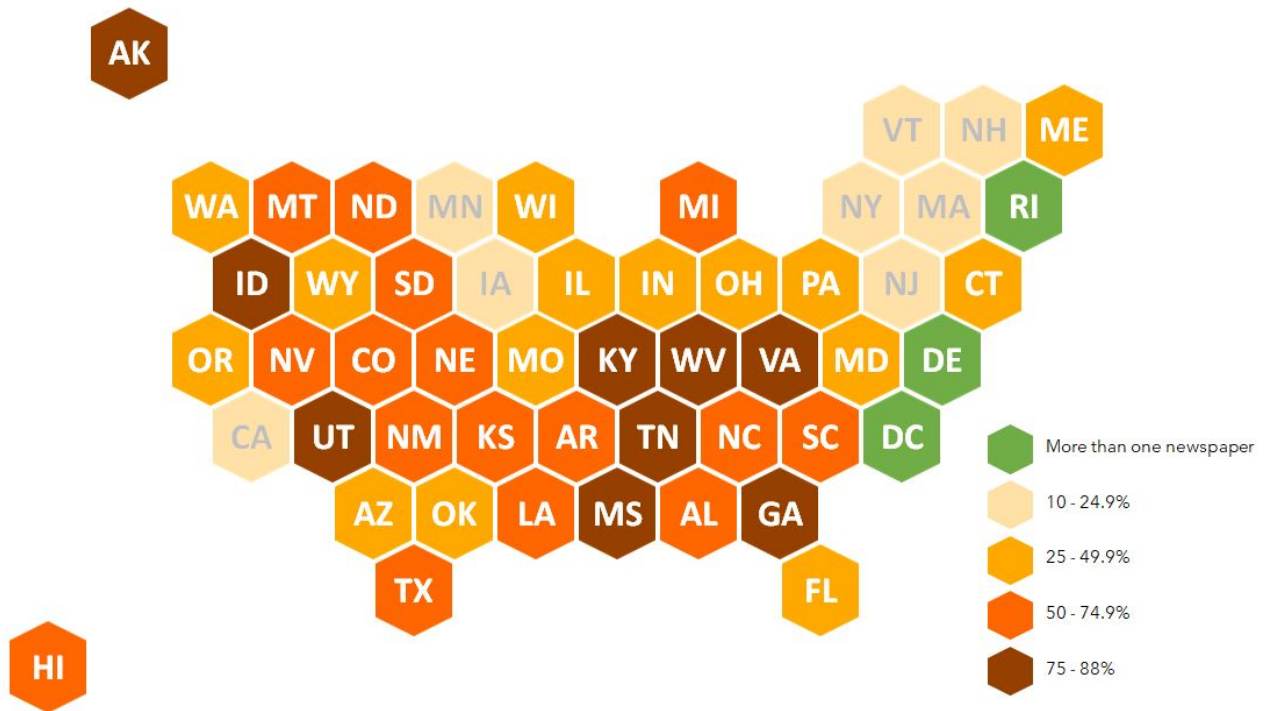
Indicators in this section

- Counties with no or only one newspaper
- Internet access

More than half of counties in the U.S. are news deserts, meaning a critical vehicle for trusted information during the pandemic is absent.

Percent of counties with no or only one newspaper, 2020

Often only a weekly



Source: [UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media](#)

Covid and the economic downturn are impacting local communities in very different ways, meaning that local journalism will be more important than ever to inform the public about relevant risks, share proven ways to prevent the spread, correct harmful misinformation, and hold state and local governments accountable. Recently, for example, reporters at the Richmond Times-Dispatch broke the news on Virginia combining tests for the virus and the antibodies, rendering the numbers less actionable.¹ A recent Pew Research survey revealed that both Republicans and Democrats trust local news media to get the Covid facts right more so than news media in general.²

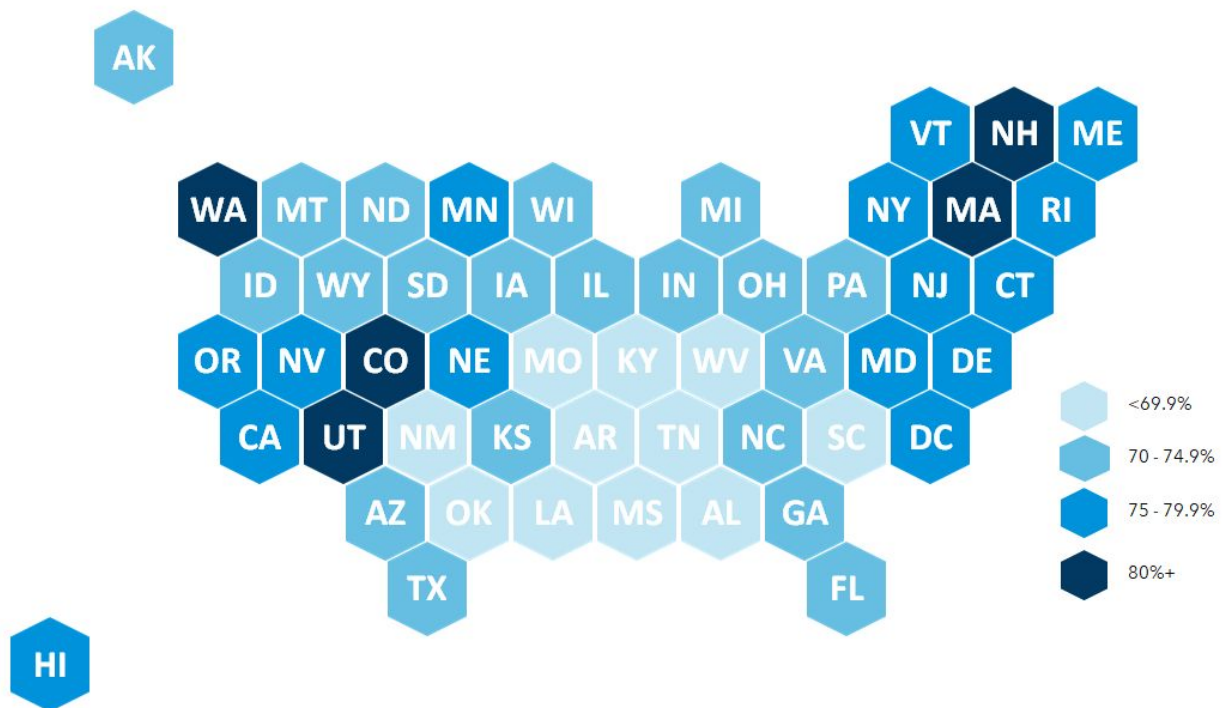
In early April, Brookings researchers found that half of counties that had reported any Covid cases were news deserts.³ That overlap may grow as Covid spreads beyond metropolitan areas into more rural and southern counties where news deserts are especially a problem.

An unfortunate twist to the intersection of dwindling local news sources and the pandemic is the role that local news plays in infectious disease surveillance. With less local news to draw from, epidemiologists will have a harder time getting early disease signals and refining recommendations for many communities.⁴

The internet is least available across the South, making many states less prepared for online learning, remote work, and active civic participation during the pandemic.

Internet access by state, 2018

Percent of households with broadband, dial-up, or other internet access excluding households with cellular-only



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey](#)

Internet access has become an essential utility, but more than 30% of households in Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, New Mexico, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, West Virginia and South Carolina do not have internet access at home. Even in the states with the highest penetration of internet access roughly 1 in 5 households have no internet. As states shut down schools and workplaces to slow the spread of the virus, households without internet access are at a significant disadvantage. School children are likely to experience learning loss, and workers in jobs amenable to working from home may find it difficult to keep up with job responsibilities or upskill for a new career.^{1,2,3} Pre-existing conditions may worsen without access to medical care through telehealth.^{4,5} In addition, internet access enables residents to be informed about Covid updates and civically engaged. But many rural areas and tribal communities in particular are less prepared for this rapid transition.⁶

After the onset of Covid, the FCC called on companies to adopt or expand low-income internet access programs. A number of local providers responded, making free internet access available to households that did not previously have it, especially families with children through the end of the school year.⁷ But these efforts were temporary and unsustainable.⁸ Recently, stakeholders including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and 38 attorneys general have urged Congress to fund increased access to broadband.^{9,10}

Prosperity

People

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

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

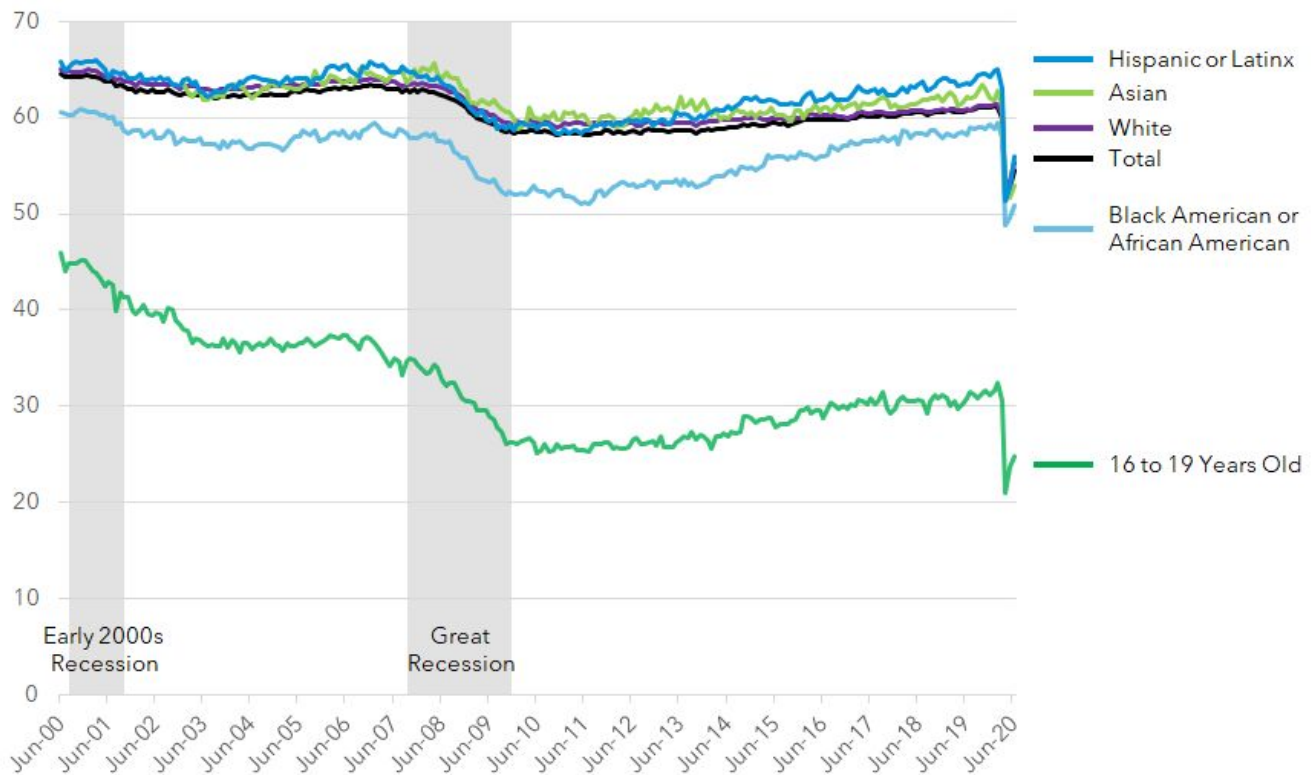
Indicators in this section

- Employment rate
- Food insecurity
- Housing insecurity

The employment rate fell in April 2020 as millions of Americans lost work. After a slight rebound, employment rates are lowest among Black adults (51%) and youth ages 16-19 (25%) as of June.

Employment rate, by race and age

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



Source: [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

Crises exacerbate underlying disparities, and employment figures are no exception during this pandemic. Though there has been a slight rebound between April and June 2020, employment rates remain at the lowest levels in recent history, including the Great Recession.

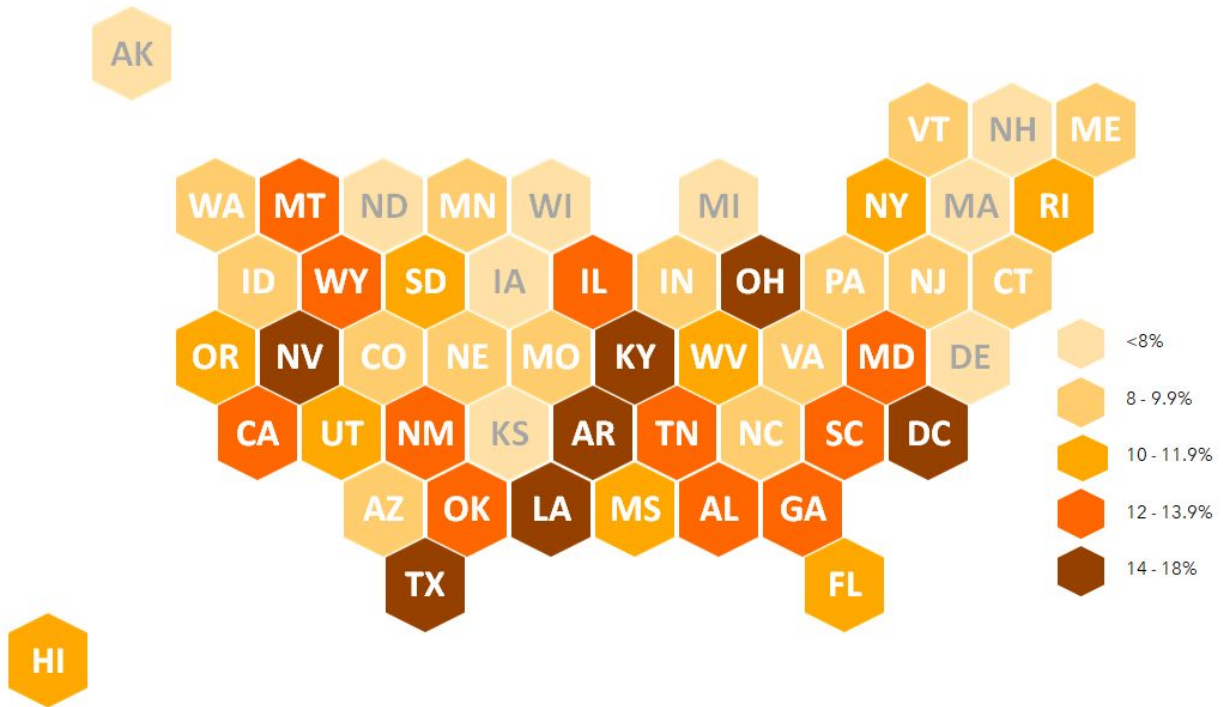
While 55% of white adults had employment, only 51% of Black adults had employment as of June. This is in part due to the high representation of Black workers in low-wage service jobs in hotels, retail, and foodservice that were hit especially hard by the need for social distancing.¹

The employment rate for youth ages 16 to 19, which typically hovers around 30%, was only 25% in June 2020. A slow start into the job market for young people can have lifetime earning implications. Given the uncertainty for school openings in the Fall, it is too soon to tell if such conditions might nudge young people into college, as has happened in other economic downturns.^{2,3}

More than 1 in 10 adults report their families have gone hungry during the pandemic. Nevada and Louisiana rank highest with 18% going hungry and Northern states Massachusetts (5.5%) and Delaware (5.9%) rank lowest.

Food insecurity by state, July 2-July 7

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



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

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

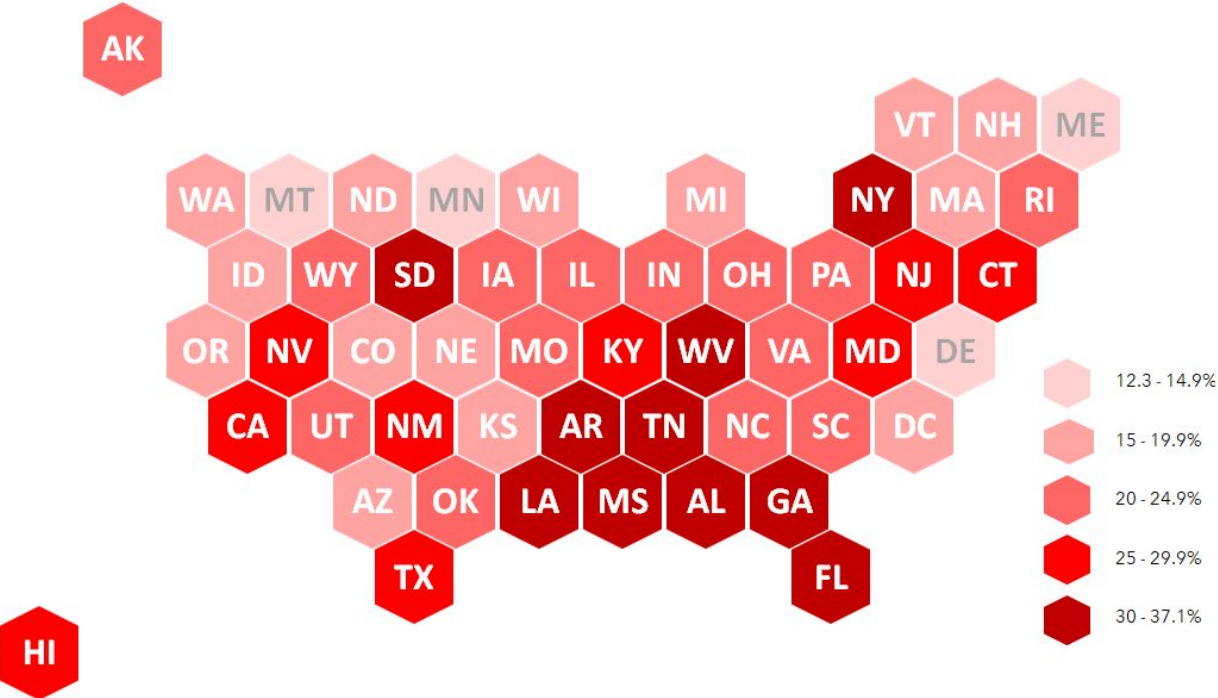
Though difficult to quantify, the role of food pantries, community volunteers, local emergency food programs, and increased flexibility for federal food programs are most certainly buffering the full impact of the pandemic on hunger.^{6,7} Even so, an estimated 26 million adults in the U.S. report their families are sometimes or often going hungry these days. Over the 10 weeks of surveys so far during the pandemic, Louisiana is consistently among the most food-insecure states.

Not only are there differences in food security across states during the current crisis, but historical data show a persistent disparity with Black and Hispanic households going hungry at rates twice that of white households.⁸ For those living in food deserts, a cruel twist of biology comes into play; food insecurity is linked to conditions such as diabetes and obesity, and those comorbidities are also among the most common risk factors for worse Covid outcomes.^{9,10}

Nationwide, 1 in 4 adults is unlikely to be able to pay next month’s rent or mortgage. Across many southern states, New York, and South Dakota, 1 in 3 adults may be unable to pay for housing in August.

Housing insecurity by state, July 2-July 7

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



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

As of July, more than 35% of adults in Mississippi and Louisiana have either missed a housing payment or expect they won’t be able to pay for housing next month. In Alabama, Georgia, Arkansas, New York, Tennessee, Florida, South Dakota, and West Virginia more than 30% of adults are similarly unlikely to be able to make their next rent or mortgage payment. In every state across the nation, a minimum of 12% of all adults may be unable to pay next month’s rent or mortgage. Renters who are unable to pay their rent are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Nationwide, households with children are particularly at risk with 1 in 4 adults in rental households with children reporting a late payment.¹

The CARES act provided a temporary moratorium on evictions, but only for properties receiving federal subsidies or federally backed loans and only until July 24, 2020.^{2,3} While federal protections on some single-family home rentals have been extended until August 31, many communities are worried about an impending wave of homelessness when expanded federal unemployment benefits end in July.^{4,5,6} Homeowners are similarly at risk of foreclosure as CARES Act provisions are limited, temporary, and only for federally backed mortgages.⁴

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