WHERE WE STAND

9TH EDITION, 2024

THE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF THE ST. LOUIS REGION

EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

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WHERE WE STAND

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To the Reader

Where do we stand, and where are we going?

Since 1992, East-West Gateway Council of Governments (EWG) has provided objective, reliable, and verifiable data for assessing the health and competitiveness of the St. Louis region in our signature Where We Stand (WWS) publication. While WWS has shifted and changed over the years, each report has served as a snapshot of the St. Louis region's standing compared to peer metropolitan regions.

In this ninth edition of WWS, we once again provide that snapshot while also posing a question to our readers and the region as a whole: How do we define regional success?

Is population growth the cure-all for what ails St. Louis? Is vacancy actually a harbinger of decline? Are rising income levels an indicator that the whole region is succeeding together? Or is defining success a good deal more complex than making it to the top of the tables?
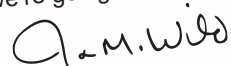
There are not straightforward or concrete answers to any of these questions. Sometimes a variable seems to point to a clear positive outcome. Often the reality is far more complicated. In this document, we sought to dig into the variables and engage with the difficult questions that they pose.

In engaging in this process, our research team identified "vitality metrics," key data points that are often used to measure regional success. In addition to showing how St. Louis stacks up against its peers, the team also evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of each vitality metric as a measure of regional success.

This publication does not provide all the answers. In fact, it concludes by raising even further questions to explore. What we seek with this document is to stimulate discussion on important topics and invite others to think critically about the data presented.

We want to give context to the comparisons so that regional leaders, researchers, and residents can come away with a clearer heading for the next leg of St. Louis' journey.

We at EWG hope that this edition of Where We Stand can be the opening remarks in a larger conversation in which we as a region collectively determine not only where we stand, but where we're going and how we plan to get there together.

James M. Wild

James M. Wild, Executive Director
East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Introduction

Purpose and Process of WWS 9

This edition of WWS took a different approach than was used for past editions. The central motivation for changing the WWS formula was to contribute more directly to efforts to make St. Louis a successful region. Defining "success" is itself a difficult and subjective task. Different people in the region will have varying perspectives on what it means for a region to be successful. Measuring success entails examining advantages and disadvantages of multiple indicators. It also requires an understanding of tradeoffs among indicators of success. Moreover, even regions that are generally considered successful usually have serious challenges, and bright spots exist in regions that are sometimes considered troubled.

Beyond understanding how to measure success, an even more important question to consider is what we can do about it. When someone sees something admirable in another region that may be lacking in St. Louis, it is common for them to ask: What are they doing that we're not? It is not a straightforward task to demonstrate causality in accounting for differences in socioeconomic outcomes. Moreover, it is not always clear what led to a given outcome. Local outcomes are influenced by national trends and policies, presence of natural amenities, and in some cases, the luck of having a pioneer firm in a growth industry. Nonetheless, it is important to take a close look at how specific regions came to experience specific outcomes, to weigh the influence of local decisions, and to ask whether effective decisions in other regions can be emulated here.

WWS 9 sets some groundwork for these tasks by digging into 12 key topic areas grouped into three broad categories. This introduction discusses some of the challenges of measuring success, how we built WWS 9 to help the region address these challenges, and our plan for next steps.

What is Regional Success?

One objective of this new approach to WWS is to understand what makes a region successful. This question is fraught with challenges. First, whether a region can be considered successful depends on the observer's definition of success. Is success defined as population or employment growth, or is it low congestion, higher income, or better quality of life? Second, it is frequently the case that success in one area creates tradeoffs and challenges in another. Third, there is not an exact recipe for regional success or a specific set of data that can be used to benchmark the success of all regions. Regions that are often thought of as successful have achieved success via different paths.

St. Louis needs to determine its own path to success. Where can we find common ground, and what should we prioritize for regional success? This report compiles some information to begin answering these questions and some background information on the challenges of working with performance measures.

Challenges of Measuring Success

Using data to inform decisions is a noble goal, but there are many challenges. The challenges should not steer decision-makers from this goal, but it is important to recognize and account for them. Some of the challenges faced by people working with data include:

- Different people value different things, which makes selecting a set of metrics challenging.
- Data are often not available for what we want to measure. People are often surprised that data are not available on a wide variety of topics that are important, but data collection is resource intensive.
- Data sets can be contradictory. For example, official employment estimates published by the federal government sometimes disagree on the magnitude of change, and sometimes on the direction of change. This results in ambiguity.
- In measuring performance, objective measures based on data that can be tracked over time are typically used. However, some important attributes of a region are difficult to quantify, such as quality of life. Research indicates that when people in a community are happy, healthy, and satisfied with life, there are benefits beyond the individual.[i-01]
- Every data set has its own nuances and quirks. It is important to understand what is and is not included in a data point, how categories are defined, and in the case of survey data, how questions are worded, and who responded.
- Although there is a widespread recognition that we need data to measure what is important, too much data creates an unmanageable task for analysis and policy direction.

What does success look like for St. Louis?

While taking some of the challenges of measuring performance into account, we developed a set of variables referred to as "vitality metrics" and conducted a survey of St. Louis residents.

Vitality Metrics

The vitality metrics were selected by researching performance measures used in national publications and by reviewing regional goals set by organizations in the St. Louis region. The metrics represent an effort, at a point in time, to select variables that are important, that span a range of definitions of success, and that are few enough in number to avoid information overload.

These vitality metrics are not intended to be the final word on what data should be tracked to measure the success of St. Louis. This is a work in progress.

The metrics are organized into three groups, covering 12 "topic areas", most of which require multiple metrics to address adequately. The first group, Growth Metrics, includes population change, employment change, and unemployment. The second group, Livability Metrics, comprises racial disparity, homeownership, housing affordability, vacancy rates, crime, and infant mortality. The third group, Opportunity Metrics, consists of income and income inequality, education, poverty, and well-being.

A key piece to identifying the vitality metrics is to build on what has already been done. For WWS9, we reviewed the goals of three regional initiatives. In coming months, we will build on this by identifying additional goals being pursued by organizations in the region.

The regional plans reviewed for metrics were the Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL) 2030 jobs plan,[i-02] the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRP) produced by EWG,[i-03] and the OneSTL regional plan for sustainability.[i-04] Each program covers a wide range of topics, some specific to their areas, some more general, and some that overlap with each other. All three of these plans included at least one measure of employment, GDP, commute times, and racial equity. GSL and LRP both track population growth in the central core. GSL and OneSTL both track metrics of income, educational attainment, crime, and measures of well-being. LRP and OneSTL both include measures of affordability by tracking housing and transportation costs. LRP and OneSTL also both track measures of air quality.

Survey of WWS Readers & EWG Partners

In assessing regional goals, it is also important to consider the views of residents. In 2024, EWG staff conducted a survey to gauge residents' views on regional success and quality of life. The results suggest that crime and employment are viewed as among the most important metrics for regional success and are among the most important factors in residents' quality of life. Nearly all (99%) of respondents rated employment as at least "somewhat important, and 75% identified crime as "very important."[i-05]

Other topics that were identified as important to regional success were income, wages, and quality of life. Transportation also surfaced as an important theme in open-ended questions. Population growth was commonly mentioned in open-ended responses and viewed as important, although it did not rank among the top five priorities and had the fewest "very important" selections in the list-based questions.

A set of questions aimed at a definition of the somewhat ambiguous concept, "quality of life." In response, safety/security was the item most frequently identified as "very important." Economic stability; effective government; and clean air, water, and green spaces were also selected as "very important" by at least 50% of respondents. See www.ewgateway.org/wws for a more complete summary of the survey.

The Ongoing Assessment

Defining regional success—and how we get there—is too big of a job for a single publication. This document provides a baseline analysis for a provisional set of metrics that represent indicators of success.

We hope for a robust dialogue with anyone interested in regional success. Throughout this and subsequent reports, we intend to highlight good work done by other organizations, and to integrate constructive comments from interested individuals. There is a community of individuals and organizations interested in promoting regional success through high-quality measurement and assessment. We invite you to join that community.

Next Steps

The following is our plan to build on this work and put it to use, providing a factual basis for strategic discussions in the region. We will be reaching out to partners and residents to gain a better understanding of what St. Louis is already doing right, and to refine a shared vision for what success looks like for the St. Louis region.

The following publications are intended to strengthen the connection between performance measurement and the programs and policies that support regional goals and to serve as resources for our conversations:

- Case Studies will explore how peer regions have achieved success and what we can learn from them.
- A Review of the Regions provides information on each of the peer regions at a glance. For each of the 50 most populous regions, the report includes data on the population and employment in the region as well as some of the strengths and weaknesses of each region.
- A series of Working Papers provides additional documentation on each of the vitality metrics, highlighting methodological issues and nuances that affect how the data should be interpreted and used. They will be living documents that will build on previous work and provide one location to reference key information about these topics.
- WWS Tables covering more than 200 variables will continue to be published on the website, with additional features to make it easier to search and download the tables.

Some of these publications have already been added to our website, with more to come in the near future. Visit www.ewgateway.org/wws to access these resources and the WWS suite of publications. Reach out to us at wws@ewgateway.org to sign up for our email newsletter or discuss how we can work together for a successful St. Louis.

i-01 Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D., De Neve, J.-E., Aknin, L. B., & Wang, S. (Eds.). (2023). World Happiness Report 2023. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network, accessed at https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/

i-02 Greater St. Louis Inc. "Measuring Growth." STL 2030 Progress. https://stl2030progress.com/measuring-growth/.

i-03 East-West Gateway Council of Governments. "LRP Performance Dashboard." East-West Gateway. https://www.ewgateway.org/transportation-planning/long-range-transportation-planning/lrp-performance-dashboard/.

i-04 OneSTL. "Regional Sustainability Indicators." OneSTL. http://www.onestl.org/indicators.

i-05 Survey respondents were self-selected from the EWG's listservs and social media platforms. As a result, the findings are not representative of the population of St. Louis.

Guide to Where We Stand (WWS)

WHERE WE STAND

Where does the St. Louis region stand compared to peer metropolitan regions?

This strategic assessment of the St. Louis region, Where We Stand, addresses that question by providing data on social and economic characteristics of the 50 most populous regions in the United States. These regions are our domestic competition and are generally a consistent yardstick to gauge "Where We Stand."

The document includes WWS tables on topic areas that are important to regional success. These and additional tables and WWS publications are available at www.ewgateway.org/wws.

Reading the WWS Tables
A consistent format and terminology are used for all the WWS tables.

Peer Regions: The WWS tables rank St. Louis among the 50 most populous regions as of the 2020 decennial census. See page 3 for a map of the 50 peer regions. Each April the U.S. Census Bureau releases population estimates. The MSAs that are the 50 most populous do not change often, but according to the 2023 population estimates, the 50 most populous regions now include Fresno, California and Grand Rapids, Michigan and do not include Hartford, Connecticut and New Orleans, Louisiana. For consistency, the WWS series peer regions are the 50 most populous U.S. regions based on the most recent decennial census.

Midwest Regions: Each WWS table highlights St. Louis along with nine other regions that are located in the Midwest. They are the regions that are geographically close to St. Louis and share similar histories and patterns of development.

United States or Peer Average: When possible, each WWS table provides data for the United States. When data for the United States as a whole are not available, or when the table is comparing absolute values and not relative values, such as ratios or percentages, an average for the peer regions is included.

MSAs: Unless otherwise noted, data in the WWS tables are for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). An MSA is a federally designated geography that groups counties in the United States together based on population and commuting patterns. See Page 10 for more detail on MSAs. The terms "MSAs," "regions," "peer regions," and "metro areas" are used interchangeably throughout this report.

East-West Gateway (EWG) Region: Data for some supplemental tables and charts as well as a section for each topic area are for the "East-West Gateway Region," also referred to as the "EWG Region." This is the eight-county level jurisdictions served by the East-West Gateway Council of Governments, including Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois, as well as the city of St. Louis and the counties of Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis in Missouri.

Rank Order: For consistency, the peer regions are presented from highest to lowest numeric value in all WWS tables. The ordering of the data is not meant to suggest any positive or negative judgment associated with a given measure.

In WWS tables, most data are rounded to the tenths place value (one digit after the decimal point) for presentation purposes. When possible, the rank of the regions is based on the actual value, which may extend beyond a single decimal place. In some instances, there appears to be a tie between regions, but the rank of the region is based on the unrounded value. When peer regions have the same value according to the source data, they are assigned the same rank.

Sources and Notes: For notes on the Where We Stand tables, including definitions of terms and additional information about data sources, visit www.ewgatway.org/wws

The data in this publication as well as other WWS publications and additional WWS data tables can be found at www.ewgateway.org/wws. Email wws@ewgateway.org with feedback, questions, or to subscribe to the WWS email list.

Terminology Used in the 9th Edition

Vitality Metrics: This analysis includes topic areas that are important to understanding the success of metropolitan regions. These were selected based on research and regional goals.

Most and Least Favorable: In some of the analysis, regions are referred to as the "most favorable" and the "least favorable." These are in reference to the 10 regions with the ranking that would usually be preferred by regions and the 10 with the rankings that would typically be thought of as poor. If data are not available for all 50 regions, these are top and bottom 10 among those regions for which there is data.

Seattle
Portland
Minneapolis
Milwaukee
Chicago
Detroit
Buffalo
Providence
Hartford
Boston
Salt Lake City
Sacramento
San Francisco
San Jose
Las Vegas
Denver
Kansas City
Cleveland
Columbus
Indianapolis
Pittsburgh
New York
Philadelphia
Baltimore
Washington, D.C.
Richmond
Cincinnati
Louisville
St Louis
Los Angeles
Riverside
San Diego
Phoenix
Oklahoma City
Memphis
Nashville
Virginia Beach
Raleigh
Charlotte
Atlanta
Dallas
Birmingham
Jacksonville
Austin
San Antonio
Houston
New Orleans
Orlando
Tampa
Miami

Peer Regions
Midwest Peer Regions

Population, Land Area, and Defining MSAs

Population
The WWS peer regions are the 50 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) with the largest populations as of April 1, 2020. As of 2023, populations of the peer regions range from just under 1 million in New Orleans to 19.5 million in New York.

St. Louis ranks as the 23rd most populous MSA in the United States with a population of 2.8 million. Most of the peer Midwest regions have a smaller population than St. Louis. The population of Chicago is two to six times larger than that of the other peer Midwest regions.

Land Area
The size of the peer regions varies greatly. Covering 27,277 square miles, Riverside is almost twice as large as the 2nd largest MSA (Phoenix) and more than 18 times larger than the smallest MSA (Milwaukee). The St. Louis region ranks 8th with a land area of 7,864 square miles, more than the area of three U.S. states. View the land area WWS table and other Where We Stand tables at www.ewgateway.org/wws.

Defining MSAs
Currently, there are 393 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in the United States. Each MSA has an urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000 (also referred to as "urban area" or "core"). Any adjacent or outlying counties qualify as part of an MSA if 25% of employed residents in that county commute to the central counties for work or at least 25% of workers in that county reside in the central counties.

Redefining MSAs
The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) adjusts the boundaries of MSAs after each decennial census. The most recent revision was published and went into effect on July 21, 2023. This was the first delineation since the 2020 decennial census. In the most recent delineation, there were changes to the boundaries of 16 of the peer regions. For most regions, this was an addition or removal of one county to the MSA. The most notable change was to the Hartford MSA, which changed from being made up of "counties" to "planning regions," resulting in a change in the MSA from three counties to two planning regions. For reference, there are nine planning areas in total in the state of Connecticut. Therefore, data in the report for the Harford MSA is sometimes based on the old boundaries or, in some cases, the MSA is excluded because the data source has not been updated with the new delineation.

St. Louis 15 County MSA
The St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget, includes the 15 counties depicted in the map on page 5. The eight counties that appear in purple are those served by the East-West Gateway Council of Governments.

The St. Louis MSA includes the following counties:

East-West Gateway counties: Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles, and St. Louis counties and the city of St. Louis in Missouri, along with Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.

Outlying counties: Lincoln and Warren counties in Missouri, along with the Illinois counties of Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, and Macoupin.

See page 6 for population trends for each county in the St. Louis MSA.
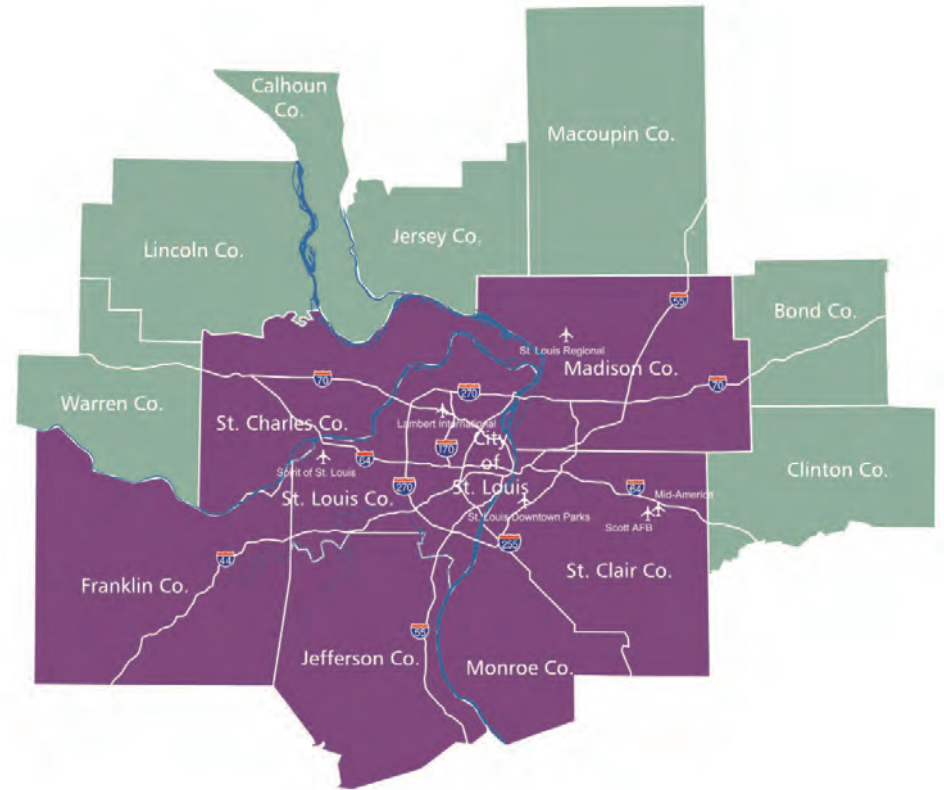
GROWTH

—

POPULATION
EMPLOYMENT

Population

In recent decades, the St. Louis MSA has had a stable population. It stood as the 23rd most populous U.S. region in 2023 with slow growth from 1980 to 2020 and a small decline since 2020. While population growth can be an indicator of regional health, other factors are important to consider in assessing the vitality of a region. There are mixed results across the other vitality metrics among the peer regions with large increases in population. While St. Louis has not had population growth, its per capita income remains higher than six of the fastest growing peer regions, and the region has less out-migration than most of the peer regions.

Measuring Success: Population

What is being measured? This vitality metric measures the increase or decrease in the number of residents in a community over a specified period of time. There are several challenges with comparable data for this metric as well as a broad challenge of a limited view that often portrays population change only as a result of people's choice to move.

Quantitative challenges include geography revisions, non-comparable data over time, and selection of time period. The Census regularly revises MSA boundaries. EWG and others adapt to this by aggregating county data to the MSA level, but not everyone is aware of when this adaptation is necessary. Further, the Census advises to not compare population estimates that are based on different decennial censuses. After each decennial census the Census Bureau revises annual population estimates for the previous decade; as of this writing, however, these intercensal estimates are not available for 2010 to 2019.[1-01] Lastly, the selection of the time period for analysis may affect results. A 1-year analysis may show the latest trends but may also turn out to be a statistical fluke. A 10- or 15-year trend may be more stable but lack timeliness.

Most discussions of population change focus on migration. However, births and deaths also play a large role in population change. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that 30 to 60% of several leading causes of death are preventable among people under age 80.[1-02] Addressing societal challenges, such as reducing homicides and racial disparities, could reduce the death rate and be a regional growth strategy.

What makes this a good measure of success?
In-migration indicates that a region's attributes lead people to move there, and out-migration indicates there may be aspects of a community that make it a less desirable location to live.

Population growth can stimulate economic activity as well as provide funds for public services.

Increased population, particularly increased density of population, can create economies of scale that make funding public services more efficient.

An increase in the largest city population is often thought of as an indicator of a healthy region. The central parts of metropolitan regions are generally the oldest parts of a region, and tend to be hubs of activity, due to convention centers, sporting facilities, cultural and arts institutions, and tourist destinations.

Both East-West Gateway's Long Range Transportation Plan and Greater St. Louis Inc. identify support for the central core as a goal for the region.

What is problematic about this measure?
Population growth can negatively affect quality of life through increased housing costs, traffic congestion, pollution, stressed infrastructure, greater demand for human services, and decreasing space for parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities.

Population growth does not always lead to prosperity: Some Sunbelt regions have fast-growing populations, but consistently lag in income levels. While a population decrease is usually perceived as a negative, a decrease can occur for neutral or even positive reasons. The population of the United States is aging, and the birth rate is declining for a variety of reasons. This circumstance is not necessarily negative, but does require adaptation.

Regions that have large net in-migration also tend to have a substantial number of people leaving the region, indicating that the population is in flux. There is also value in having a stable population with deep roots in a community. High growth regions, including **Orlando, Austin, Raleigh,** and **Jacksonville,** tend to have larger percentages of people moving out of the MSA while older and larger regions, mostly in the Northeast and Midwest have smaller proportions.[1-03] See Box 1-01 on page 6 for more.

1-01 The Census Bureau releases intercensal estimates that are based on both the 2010 and 2020 decennial census counts. These intercensal estimates are likely to differ from currently available population estimates. The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) generated its own such estimates while waiting for the Census Bureau. Based on preliminary estimates from BEA, it is anticipated that there will be significant revisions for a few of the peer regions.
1-02 Spencer, M. R., et al. (2024). Surveillance for violent deaths — National violent death reporting system, 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, 2021. MMWR Surveillance Summaries, 73(2), 1–37. https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss7302a1
1-03 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Metro-to-Metro Area Migration Flows

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

A successful region should be growing in population and have a positive national reputation" –City of St. Louis Resident

"Austin, Nashville, and Louisville…were smaller in population and size, but they found a way to attract businesses and population while St. Louis has declined." –Monroe County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Population

The peer region comparisons on population change for the two time periods indicate that while population change can be an indication of success, population growth does not necessarily result in positive outcomes on other metrics. Conversely, some regions are strong without population growth.

The nine fastest-growing regions in both periods were all in the Sunbelt. These regions also tend to have had the largest increases in employment, net migration, and population of their largest city.

Orlando, Nashville, Jacksonville, and **Dallas** are among the largest population gainers but are only in the middle of the pack on median household income and educational attainment and rank lower than the United States on housing affordability and health insurance coverage.

Houston, Tampa, San Antonio, and **Las Vegas** are among the largest population gainers but are also among the most challenged regions on many of the vitality metrics, including poverty, health insurance, well-being, and educational attainment.

San Jose and **Boston** rank among the most favorable regions on many vitality metrics, including the well-being score and other metrics that are important to quality of life, such

as health care coverage, income metrics, and infant mortality rate. However, these regions have been about average in population change with **San Jose** experiencing a population decrease from 2019 to 2023.

There is not a strong association between population growth and income. Of the 10 fastest-growing regions from 2019 to 2023, only four had per capita income levels that were higher than that of **St. Louis** and four were in the bottom half of the peer regions on this income variable. Further, the two regions with the highest per capita incomes experienced population decline from 2019 to 2023 and were below the U.S. average for change from 2010 to 2023.

The slowest growing regions tend to have high levels of segregation and concentrated poverty. These fall into two groups: low-income southern regions, including **Birmingham, Memphis,** and **New Orleans,** and traditionally industrial regions in the north, including **Detroit, Cleveland,** and **Buffalo.**

Population Change
Percent change, 2019-2023

1	**Austin**	**11.0**
2	Jacksonville	9.7
3	Nashville	8.7
4	Raleigh	8.4
5	Orlando	8.0
6	Dallas	6.9
7	Houston	6.3
8	Charlotte	6.2
9	San Antonio	6.0
10	Indianapolis	5.0
11	Atlanta	5.0
12	Oklahoma City	4.8
13	Tampa	4.5
14	Richmond	4.3
15	Providence	3.4
16	Salt Lake City	3.0
17	Kansas City	2.8
18	Las Vegas	2.7
19	Columbus	2.6
20	Birmingham	2.6
21	Buffalo	2.4
22	Sacramento	2.4
23	Cincinnati	2.4
24	Phoenix	2.3
25	Philadelphia	2.3
26	Virginia Beach	2.2
United States		**2.0**
27	Minneapolis	2.0
28	Washington, D.C.	1.8
29	Louisville	1.8
30	Seattle	1.7
31	New York	1.7
32	Denver	1.4
33	Baltimore	1.1
34	Riverside	1.0
35	Boston	0.9
36	Pittsburgh	0.8
37	Portland	0.6
38	Cleveland	0.6
39	Detroit	0.5
40	Miami	0.3
41	Chicago	-0.2
42	**St. Louis**	**-0.3**
43	Memphis	-0.8
44	Milwaukee	-1.1
45	San Diego	-1.8
46	San Jose	-2.0
47	Los Angeles	-2.9
48	San Francisco	-3.3
49	**New Orleans**	**-5.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Population Change
Percent change, 2010-2023

1	**Austin**	**43.2**
2	Raleigh	32.7
3	Orlando	31.7
4	Nashville	27.4
5	Jacksonville	27.0
6	Dallas	26.7
7	Houston	26.3
8	San Antonio	25.6
9	Charlotte	24.7
10	Phoenix	20.6
11	Tampa	19.9
12	Las Vegas	19.7
13	Atlanta	19.4
14	Denver	17.6
15	Oklahoma City	17.5
16	Seattle	17.3
17	Salt Lake City	16.2
18	Indianapolis	15.3
19	Columbus	14.4
20	Richmond	13.6
21	Washington, D.C.	13.1
22	Sacramento	12.4
23	Portland	12.4
24	Minneapolis	11.1
25	Miami	10.7
26	Riverside	10.5
27	Kansas City	10.3
United States		**8.3**
28	Boston	7.7
29	Louisville	6.9
30	Cincinnati	6.5
31	Virginia Beach	5.8
32	San Jose	5.7
33	San Diego	5.4
34	San Francisco	5.1
35	Birmingham	4.9
36	Providence	4.7
37	Philadelphia	4.6
38	Baltimore	4.4
39	New York	3.4
40	Buffalo	1.8
41	Memphis	1.4
42	Detroit	1.2
43	**St. Louis**	**0.2**
44	Milwaukee	0.2
45	New Orleans	0.1
46	Los Angeles	-0.3
47	Chicago	-0.4
48	Cleveland	-0.8
49	**Pittsburgh**	**-1.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Regions that experience large net migration often see high levels of both in-migration and out-migration. **St. Louis** is 43rd with one of the lowest rates of in-migration (2.9%), but the region has the 14th lowest rate of out-migration (3.1%). **Orlando, Austin,** and **Raleigh** have the three largest in-migration and net migration rates but had some of the highest rates of out-migration, ranking 10th, 12th, and 8th, respectively.

Over the last decade, some of the peer regions have experienced substantial growth in population of their largest cities while others have seen decreases. Regions with growing central cities, such as **Orlando, Charlotte, Austin,** and **Raleigh,** also experienced some of the largest growth in employment and regional population and had relatively high rates of net migration. Regions with central city population decreases also experienced relatively large decreases in regional employment and population and high regional homicide rates.

Like other regions in the Midwest and South, the central city in the **St. Louis** MSA has experienced population decline. Among the peer regions, only **Detroit** had a larger decrease than the city of **St. Louis.**

Net Migration

Percent of 2020 population, 2020-2023

1	Jacksonville	5.9
2	Austin	5.6
3	Tampa	5.4
4	Raleigh	5.0
5	Orlando	4.5
6	San Antonio	4.2
7	Charlotte	4.2
8	Dallas	4.0
9	Phoenix	3.4
10	Nashville	3.2
11	Houston	3.1
12	Oklahoma City	2.7
13	Richmond	2.3
14	Las Vegas	2.2
15	Atlanta	2.0
16	Hartford	1.5
17	Indianapolis	1.4
18	Columbus	1.0
19	Riverside	0.9
United States		**0.8**
20	Miami	0.6
21	Kansas City	0.6
22	Cincinnati	0.6
23	Providence	0.5
24	Birmingham	0.5
25	Louisville	0.3
26	Sacramento	0.3
27	Denver	0.1
28	Pittsburgh	-0.1
29	Philadelphia	-0.2
30	Virginia Beach	-0.2
31	Buffalo	-0.3
32	Cleveland	-0.5
33	**St. Louis**	**-0.5**
34	Seattle	-0.6
35	Minneapolis	-0.6
36	Baltimore	-0.7
37	Portland	-0.8
38	Washington, D.C.	-0.8
39	Boston	-0.8
40	Detroit	-0.9
41	Memphis	-1.1
42	Milwaukee	-1.1
43	Salt Lake City	-1.2
44	San Diego	-1.8
45	Chicago	-2.3
46	Los Angeles	-3.3
47	New York	-3.3
48	San Jose	-3.6
49	San Francisco	-4.3
50	**New Orleans**	**-4.7**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Change in Largest City Population

Percent change, 2010-2022

1	Orlando	32.40
2	Seattle	23.10
3	Charlotte	22.04
4	Austin	21.52
5	Oklahoma City	19.69
6	Denver	18.98
7	Tampa	18.42
8	Jacksonville	18.20
9	Raleigh	17.93
10	Atlanta	16.88
11	Columbus	15.08
12	Phoenix	13.67
13	Nashville	13.28
14	Sacramento	13.22
15	Miami	12.52
16	Las Vegas	12.28
17	Richmond	12.21
18	Washington, D.C.	11.64
19	Minneapolis	11.11
20	San Antonio	11.01
21	Kansas City	10.74
22	Houston	10.03
23	Salt Lake City	9.78
24	Portland	8.78
25	Dallas	8.51
26	New Orleans	7.54
27	Indianapolis	7.33
28	Providence	6.66
29	San Diego	6.09
Peer Average		**6.05**
30	Buffalo	5.79
31	Riverside	5.55
32	Boston	5.33
33	Louisville	4.82
34	Cincinnati	4.18
35	Virginia Beach	4.05
36	Philadelphia	2.70
37	San Jose	1.98
38	New York	1.97
39	Los Angeles	0.77
40	San Francisco	0.40
41	Pittsburgh	-0.79
42	Chicago	-1.14
43	Hartford	-3.26
44	Memphis	-4.73
45	Milwaukee	-5.25
46	Birmingham	-7.12
47	Baltimore	-8.19
48	Cleveland	-8.88
49	**St. Louis**	**-10.25**
50	**Detroit**	**-13.11**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

EWG Region Analysis: Population

Population in the EWG region has had modest growth over the past few decades but recently experienced a small decrease in population. The central part of the region has experienced decreases in population while there has been an increase in the outer portions. Table 1-01 provides the population by county for 2010, 2019, and 2023. Map 1-01 provides the change in population across the region from 2010 to 2020.

Table 1-01. Population					
East-West Gateway region by county, 2010, 2019, and 2023					
				Percent Change	
	2010	2019	2023	2010-2023	2019-2023
Madison	269,282	263,609	262,752	-2.4	-0.3
Monroe	32,957	34,738	34,957	6.1	0.6
St. Clair	270,056	259,889	251,018	-7.0	-3.4
Franklin	101,492	103,860	106,404	4.8	2.4
Jefferson	218,733	225,402	231,230	5.7	2.6
St. Charles	360,485	401,625	416,659	15.6	3.7
St. Louis	998,954	995,467	987,059	-1.2	-0.8
City of St. Louis	319,294	300,887	281,754	-11.8	-6.4
EWG Region	2,571,253	2,585,477	2,571,833	0.0	-0.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Population estimates vintages 2020 and 2023

Box 1-01. Where do people move and why?

Most people in the United States do not move in any given year, and the share who do has declined over the long term. Further, most people who move do not move far.

The percentage of U.S. residents that moved in a given year decreased from 20.2% in 1948 to 17% in the 1990s, 8.9% in 2019, and 8.4% in 2021.[1-04,1-05,1-06] Research suggests that this is in part due to labor markets among regions becoming more similar.[1-07] A recent study found that less than 2% of job seekers moved for a job in the first quarter of 2023, compared to about 8% in 2018 and about one-third in the 1980s and 1990s.[1-08]

U.S. region inter-regional migrants constituted a small share of movers, about 10.7% of movers, or 1.3% of the U.S. population, in 2022. The Northeast had the highest percentage of non-movers, and the South had the lowest percentage.[1-09] The share of non-movers among the peer regions ranged from 81.7% in Austin to 90.6% in New York. The percentage in St. Louis (86.4) was close to the peer region average (85.3%).

Why People Move. People decide where to live for a variety of reasons. Reasons for moving can be complex and can change throughout a lifetime. Broadly, there are three categories of why people live where they do—employment, social ties (family/friends), and quality of life factors.

Census data indicates that the most common reasons for moving are house-related followed by family-related. These two categories likely each have elements that relate to quality of life and social ties. According to the data, employment is the reason for a move for a smaller share of people. The Census does not have a category for quality-of-life factors, but other survey research indicates that one-third of movers and one-third of natives chose their place of residence due to these over employment or family reasons.[1-10] For more details on this topic, see ewgateway.org/wws for a working paper on population change.

1-04 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC).

1-05 U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). United States migration continued to decline from 2020 to 2021. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2022/03/united-states-migration-continued-decline-from-2020-to-2021.html

1-06 Frey, W. H. (2021). U.S. population growth hits 80-year low, capping off a year of demographic stagnation. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/us-population-growth-hits-80-year-low-capping-off-a-year-of-demographic-stagnation/

1-07 Hellerstein, J. K. (2013). Why are Americans moving less? Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2013/why-are-americans-moving-less

1-08 Chasnoff, M. (2023, May 30). Workers aren't relocating for new jobs anymore – and not just because of remote work. St. Louis Business Journal. https://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/news/2023/05/30/remote-work-hybrid-housing-costs-mortgage-move.html?utm_source=st&utm_medium=en&utm_campaign=me&utm_content=SL&ana=e_SL_me&j=31646388&senddate=2023-05-31

1-09 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2022 (S0702).

1-10 Knight Foundation, & Gallup. (2020). Community ties: Understanding what attaches people to the place where they live. https://knightfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Community-Ties-Final-pg.pdf

Map 1-01. Population Change, 2010-2020
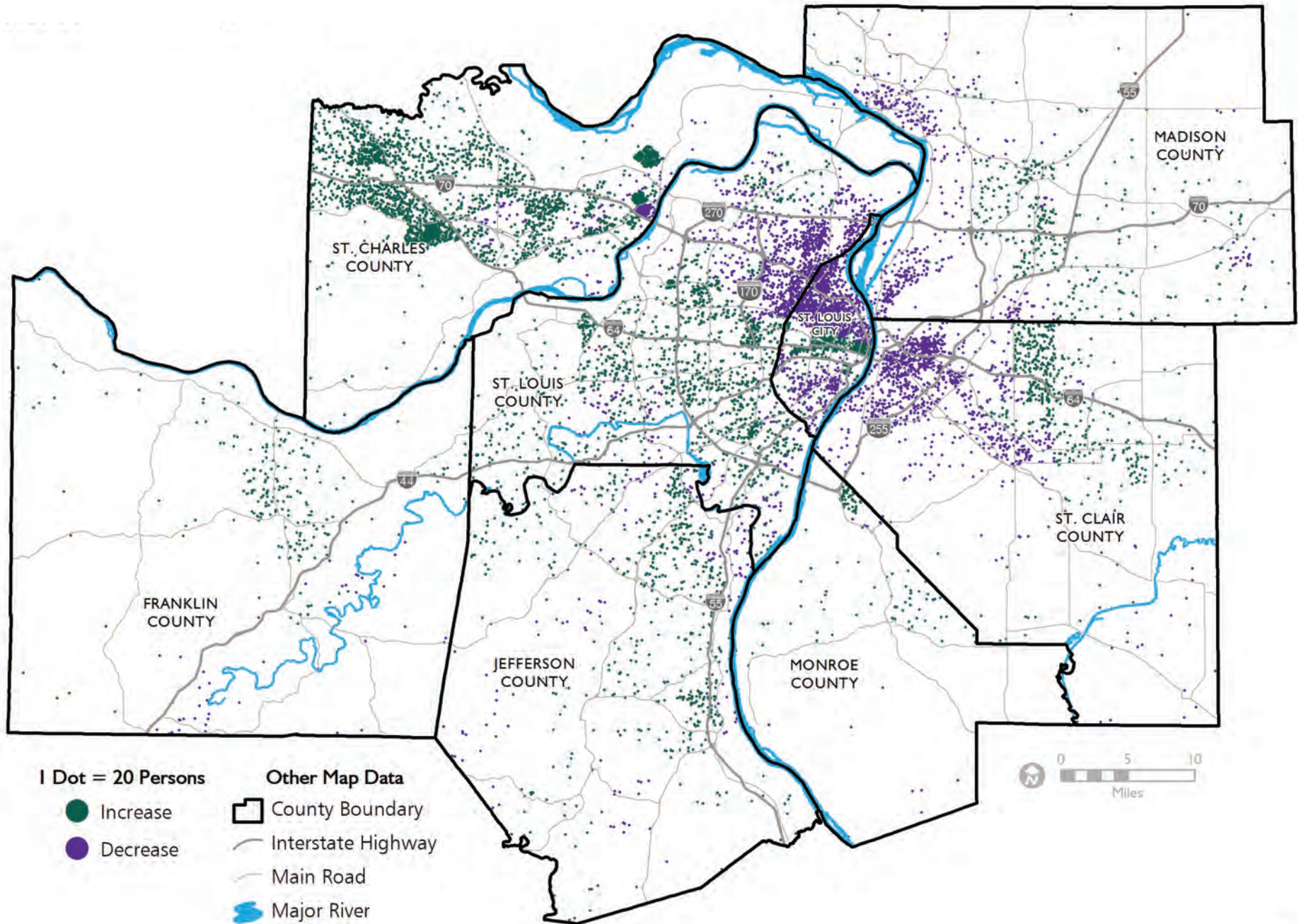
MADISON COUNTY

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

ST. LOUIS CITY

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

FRANKLIN COUNTY

JEFFERSON COUNTY

MONROE COUNTY

I Dot = 20 Persons

● Increase
● Decrease

Other Map Data

▢ County Boundary
— Interstate Highway
— Main Road
〰 Major River

0   5   10
Miles

Employment

The 2023 unemployment rate in St. Louis was lower than the national average and below most peer regions. Over the past decade, the region has had moderate employment growth, although it has lagged behind many of the peer regions. Most of the peer regions, including St. Louis, have higher employment levels in 2023 than 2019 with St. Louis about in the middle for job growth in this period. The peer regions with employment growth tend to do well in other vitality areas, but positive employment change is not always correlated with overall success.
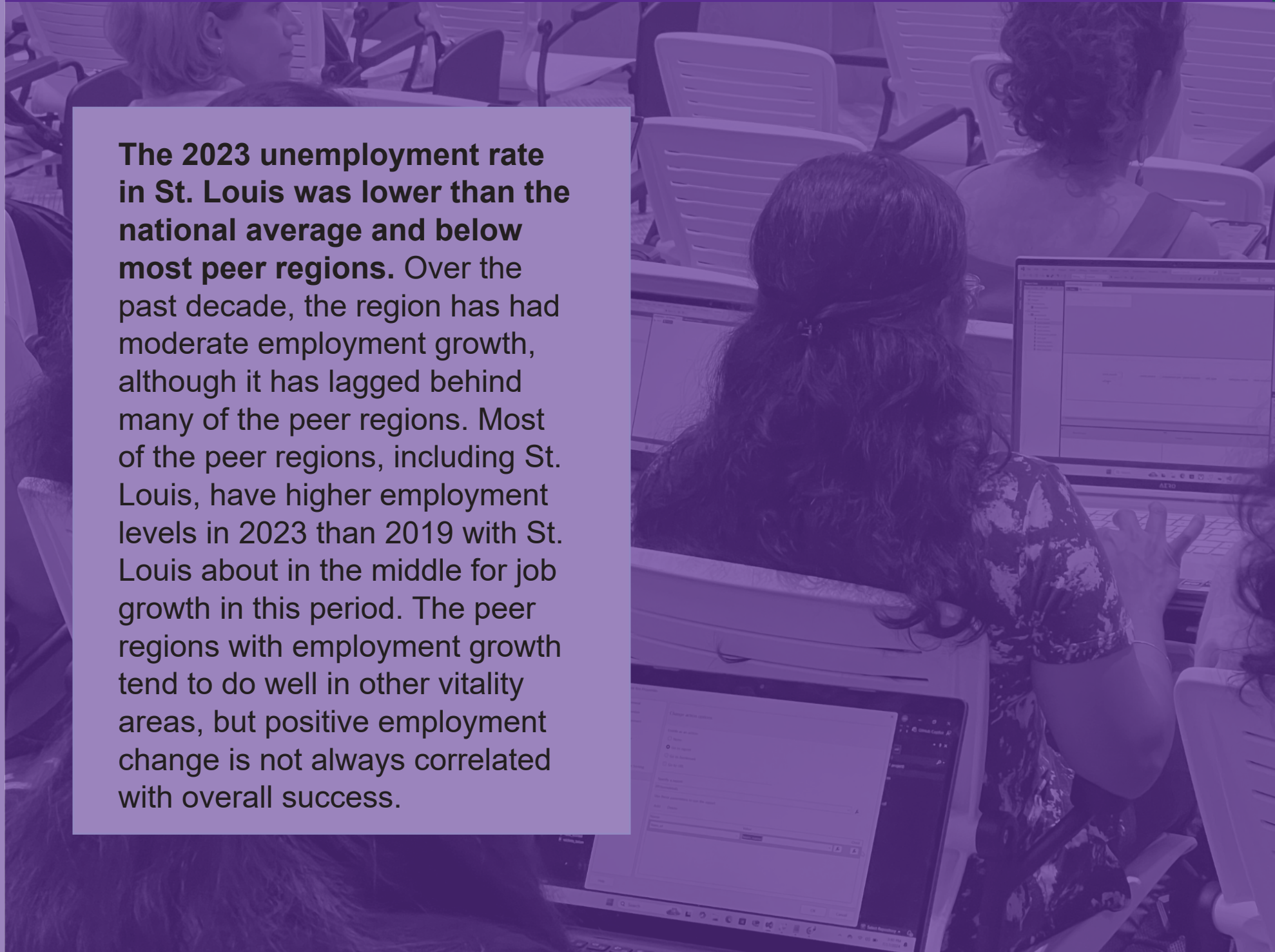
Measuring Success: Employment

What is being measured? There are at least four data sources on regional employment levels. In this WWS publication we use each source for different purposes. The following are some of the details important to this discussion, but there are plenty of nuances and differences between these sources. For more, please see the employment working paper on the EWG website.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) is used for unemployment rates. It differs from the other sources by using place of residence, rather than place of employment.

BLS Current Employment Statistics (CES) was selected as the primary employment measure for this publication for three reasons: It is more current than Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data, it contains the least data suppression which enables analysis of industry trends, and it has a broader definition of payroll employment than BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

The EWG regional analysis uses QCEW and BEA employment estimates because they are the only two sources that have county-level data.

What makes these good measures of success?
Most income is derived from employment. Therefore, an increase in employment is directly related to the ability of individuals and households to earn the money needed to meet basic needs and save for future needs.

A growing number of jobs in a region may indicate increasing opportunities for individuals and households to accumulate wealth.

A low unemployment rate is a sign of a healthy economy, while a high rate indicates the region is not offering enough jobs for the workforce or that there is a mismatch in skills and other factors between those seeking employment and job openings.

What is problematic about these measures?
The metrics do not consider the quality of jobs, such as wage levels, health insurance, and potential for advancement; the needs of residents, such as hours and accesibility; or whether the skills and education of existing residents match the jobs.

Among the peer regions, employment growth is not correlated with income growth.

Additional jobs may lead to an increase in pollution, congestion, housing costs, and demands on public infrastructure and services.

As measured by CES, employment counts consider only wage and salary jobs, omitting proprietors' employment (those who own a business).

Unemployment rates do not count people who have given up on job searches and dropped out of the labor force or those who desire additional hours.

The selection of the time period for analysis may affect results. A 1-year analysis may show the latest trends but may also turn out to be a statistical fluke. While a 10- or 15- year trend may be more stable, it may also lack timeliness.

A small amount of unemployment exists even in healthy labor markets due to job searches. A very low unemployment rate could be associated with labor shortages, which pose challenges for businesses.

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"Employment & educational venues should be robust, with opportunities that attract investor dollars and a bright, energetic work force."
–St. Charles County Resident

"It all starts with drawing and growing jobs. I don't think a region can successfully grow employment unless the major regional institutions are aligned and unified on a common vision."
–St. Louis County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Employment

Employment is above pre-pandemic levels in 38 of the peer regions as well as nationally. Gains were not even across the country but followed longer term trends.

Regions in the South and the West continued to be the fastest growing, although not all metros located in the Sunbelt are growing quickly. Both from 2010 to 2023 and from 2019 to 2023, 12 regions in the South and West experienced the fastest employment growth. These regions also tend to have strong population growth, including in their central cities, and relatively low levels of income inequality.

Most Midwest peer regions experienced smaller gains than the national average in both time periods. **St. Louis** fared better in the pandemic recovery and that recovery was average among the peer regions. In contrast, it ranked 41st when measured over the longer time period.

Almost a third of the peer regions experienced net job loss from 2019 to 2023, indicating that they did not fully recover jobs lost during the pandemic. Regions that remained more than 1% below 2019 employment levels were also among the 13 peer regions with the slowest employment growth prior to the pandemic (2010 to 2019). The other five regions that have not fully recovered from the pandemic were among the 15 peer regions with the steepest declines in jobs from 2019 to 2020, all with more than a 7% decrease.

Regions with employment growth tend to do well in other vitality areas, but employment change does not have a direct relationship with a region's overall success or challenges. Further, it is important to consider how much new jobs pay and who is being hired for them.

Technology industries drove rapid employment growth in Raleigh and Austin, while transportation and logistics was the main driver in Riverside. For more, see WWS Case Studies: www.ewgateway.org/wws

Change in Employment
Percent change, 2019-2023

#	Region	Percent
1	Austin	19.0
2	Raleigh	12.9
3	Dallas	11.6
4	Nashville	10.6
5	Tampa	10.5
6	Phoenix	10.3
7	Orlando	9.5
8	Jacksonville	9.2
9	Salt Lake City	8.8
10	Charlotte	8.4
11	Las Vegas	8.3
12	Riverside	8.2
13	San Antonio	7.9
14	Houston	6.8
15	Atlanta	6.7
16	Miami	6.5
17	Indianapolis	6.2
18	Denver	5.8
19	Oklahoma City	5.4
20	Sacramento	5.0
21	Richmond	3.7
22	Columbus	3.6
	United States	**3.4**
23	Kansas City	3.3
24	San Diego	3.3
25	Philadelphia	3.2
26	Cincinnati	3.1
27	Birmingham	3.0
28	Louisville	3.0
29	Seattle	1.8
30	St. Louis	1.6
31	Virginia Beach	1.2
32	Portland	1.2
33	New York	0.9
34	San Jose	0.8
35	Washington, D.C.	0.6
36	Memphis	0.6
37	Chicago	0.5
38	Providence	0.0
39	Los Angeles	-0.2
40	Detroit	-0.2
41	Boston	-0.6
42	Minneapolis	-0.7
43	San Francisco	-1.0
44	Hartford	-1.2
45	Baltimore	-1.4
46	Milwaukee	-1.6
47	Cleveland	-1.7
48	Buffalo	-2.1
49	Pittsburgh	-2.5
50	New Orleans	-3.4

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Change in Employment
Percent change, 2010-2023

#	Region	Percent
1	Austin	69.6
2	Nashville	51.6
3	Orlando	47.2
4	Raleigh	46.6
5	Riverside	45.9
6	Dallas	44.2
7	Phoenix	42.1
8	Charlotte	41.3
9	Las Vegas	39.7
10	Salt Lake City	39.5
11	Tampa	38.6
12	Jacksonville	36.4
13	Denver	36.3
14	San Antonio	35.9
15	Atlanta	34.2
16	Miami	32.3
17	San Jose	32.3
18	Houston	31.5
19	Sacramento	29.0
20	San Francisco	28.0
21	Seattle	27.6
22	Indianapolis	27.2
23	Portland	26.6
24	Columbus	25.4
25	San Diego	25.1
26	Oklahoma City	22.9
27	Richmond	20.4
	United States	**19.7**
28	Louisville	19.5
29	Los Angeles	17.5
30	Cincinnati	17.5
31	Kansas City	17.4
32	Detroit	17.3
33	New York	16.9
34	Boston	15.4
35	Minneapolis	15.0
36	Philadelphia	14.1
37	Birmingham	14.0
38	Washington, D.C.	12.9
39	Chicago	12.8
40	Memphis	11.1
41	St. Louis	10.9
42	Baltimore	10.5
43	Providence	10.2
44	Virginia Beach	9.5
45	Cleveland	7.2
46	Milwaukee	6.5
47	New Orleans	6.1
48	Hartford	5.3
49	Buffalo	3.3
50	Pittsburgh	3.1

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Employment growth is associated with some positive regional outcomes among the peer regions, including access to amenities such as vehicles, computers, and the Internet. Some regions combined fast employment growth with high education levels and wages. Austin, Raleigh, Dallas, and Charlotte were among the 10 fastest-growing regions for employment from 2010 to 2023 and were also above the national average on wage per job and college attainment.

However, fast employment growth does not guarantee positive outcomes on other metrics. **Orlando, Las Vegas**, and **Riverside** have consistently experienced robust job growth, but are in the bottom 10 on per capita income and are below the national average on college attainment and wages.

Slow employment growth does not guarantee low performance on other metrics. Regions such as **Boston, San Francisco, San Jose, Minneapolis,** and **Seattle** have seen below average job growth, but are above average on several metrics, including income, educational attainment, and well-being score.

Employment growth is not always associated with low unemployment. **Las Vegas, Riverside, Sacramento,** and **Houston** were among the eight regions with the highest unemployment rates despite having higher employment growth than most of the peer regions. Such a situation can occur when migrants or new entrants to the workforce are hired for a large proportion of jobs, or when a region has high rates of job turnover.

Employment growth can occur without direct benefits to current residents. **St. Louis** residents who were born and remain in the MSA earn, on average, lower incomes than those who were born elsewhere in the country as well as those who were born and migrated here from other countries.[2-01] Research commissioned by the James S. McDonnell Foundation shows that education levels are higher for **St. Louis** residents who were born elsewhere than for individuals born in the region.[2-02]

Unemployment Rate

Unemployed individuals who are looking for work as a percent of the labor force, 2023

1	**Las Vegas**	**5.4**
2	Riverside	4.7
3	Los Angeles	4.7
4	New York	4.4
5	Chicago	4.3
6	Sacramento	4.3
7	Houston	4.2
8	Memphis	4.0
9	San Diego	3.9
10	Buffalo	3.8
11	New Orleans	3.8
12	Dallas	3.7
13	Hartford	3.7
14	San Antonio	3.7
15	San Francisco	3.7
16	Cleveland	3.7
17	Seattle	3.7
18	Louisville	3.7
United States		**3.6**
19	Detroit	3.6
20	Philadelphia	3.6
21	Portland	3.6
22	San Jose	3.6
23	Phoenix	3.5
24	Pittsburgh	3.5
25	Austin	3.3
26	Cincinnati	3.3
27	Milwaukee	3.3
28	Charlotte	3.2
29	**St. Louis**	**3.2**
30	Providence	3.2
31	Denver	3.2
32	Atlanta	3.1
33	Columbus	3.1
34	Boston	3.1
35	Virginia Beach	3.1
36	Raleigh	3.0
37	Richmond	3.0
38	Oklahoma City	3.0
39	Jacksonville	3.0
40	Indianapolis	3.0
41	Tampa	3.0
42	Orlando	2.9
43	Kansas City	2.9
44	Minneapolis	2.7
45	Salt Lake City	2.7
46	Nashville	2.6
47	Washington, D.C.	2.6
48	Miami	2.5
49	Birmingham	2.3
50	**Baltimore**	**2.1**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

2-01 In the St. Louis MSA, full-time workers who were born in Missouri or Illinois earn, on average, $70,098. People who move from elsewhere in the United States earn $90,162, while full-time workers who were born in other countries earn $79,551. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample accessed through IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.
2-02 Benner, Chris & Manuel Pastor. 2024. Looking Forward: Inclusion, Prosperity, & Community in a Changing St. Louis.

With the exception of the pandemic years, most of the peer regions have experienced annual increases in employment since 2010 and have low unemployment rates, but there are large racial and ethnic disparities.

None of the peer regions experienced dramatic drops in employment from 2010 to 2023. With the exception of 2019 to 2020, only four regions experienced one year-over-year decrease in the 13-year period, all with declines of less than 0.5%.

In 2023, each region had an unemployment rate lower than 5.5%, which is low compared to historical averages, as seen on Figure 2-01 and the WWS table on unemployment. However, in 2022, only four regions had white unemployment rates that were higher than the lowest Black unemployment rate. See Figure 2-02.

In **St. Louis,** the Black unemployment rate was more than three times higher than the rate for the white population, 8.6% and 2.4%, respectively.

Figure 2-01. Unemployment Rate
St. Louis MSA and United States, 1990-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Figure 2-02. Range of Unemployment Rates by Racial Group
Peer regions, 2022

11.2%: Highest rate of a Black population group in any peer region

4.1%: Highest rate of a white population group in any peer region

3.9%: Lowest rate for a Black population group in any peer region

1.8%: Lowest rate of a white population group in any peer region

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Employment by Industry

The industries that drove employment growth differed by region. Professional and business services was the fastest-growing industry nationally and in many regions, including **Orlando, Tampa, Austin** and **Raleigh.** The education and health industry group was the leading sector in **Phoenix** and **Jacksonville. Riverside's** employment growth was driven primarily by growth in transportation and logistics.

Nationally, four industries (professional and business services, health care and social assistance, transportation and warehousing, and construction) had the most robust growth both from 2010 to 2023 and from 2019 to 2023. See Table 2-01 and Figure 2-03.

Professional and business services accounted for the most U.S. growth with 29.3% of job gains from 2019 to 2023 and 23.4% from 2010 to 2023. This industry was the third fastest growing from 2010 to 2023, increasing by 35.8% and becoming the largest sector. Often, jobs categorized here are connected to other large growth industries, such as information technology in Austin.

Transportation and warehousing was the fastest growing industry with a 15.9% increase in jobs from 2019 to 2023 (average annual 4%) and a 57.1% increase from 2010 to 2023 (average annual 4.4%). The industry also saw the smallest decrease from 2019 to 2022. Even with the substantial growth, the industry accounted for a relatively small (4.2%) proportion of U.S. employment in 2023.

Table 2-01. Employment by Industry							
United States, 2010, 2019, and 2023							
	Employment (in thousands)			**Average Annual Percent Change**			
	2010	2019	2023	2010-2019	2019-2020	2019-2023	2010-2023
Professional and Business Services	16,824	21,334	22,840	3.0	-4.5	1.8	2.8
Government	22,490	22,613	22,782	0.1	-2.8	0.2	0.1
Health and Social Assistance	16,820	20,421	21,524	2.4	-3.1	1.4	2.2
Leisure and Hospitality	13,049	16,586	16,593	3.0	-20.7	0.0	2.1
Retail	14,404	15,560	15,590	0.9	-4.8	0.0	0.6
Manufacturing	11,528	12,817	12,940	1.2	-5.1	0.2	0.9
Financial Activities	7,695	8,754	9,197	1.5	-0.6	1.3	1.5
Construction	5,518	7,493	8,018	4.0	-3.2	1.8	3.5
Transportation and Warehousing	4,179	5,665	6,565	3.9	-0.4	4.0	4.4
Information	2,707	2,864	3,027	0.6	-5.0	1.4	0.9
Total Employment	130,345	150,904	156,051	1.8	-5.8	0.9	1.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Figure 2-03. Employment Gains by Industry
Percent of job growth
St. Louis MSA (STL) and United States, 2010 to 2023 and 2019 to 2023

Legend:
- STL 2019-2023
- STL 2010-2023
- U.S. 2019-2023
- U.S. 2010-2023
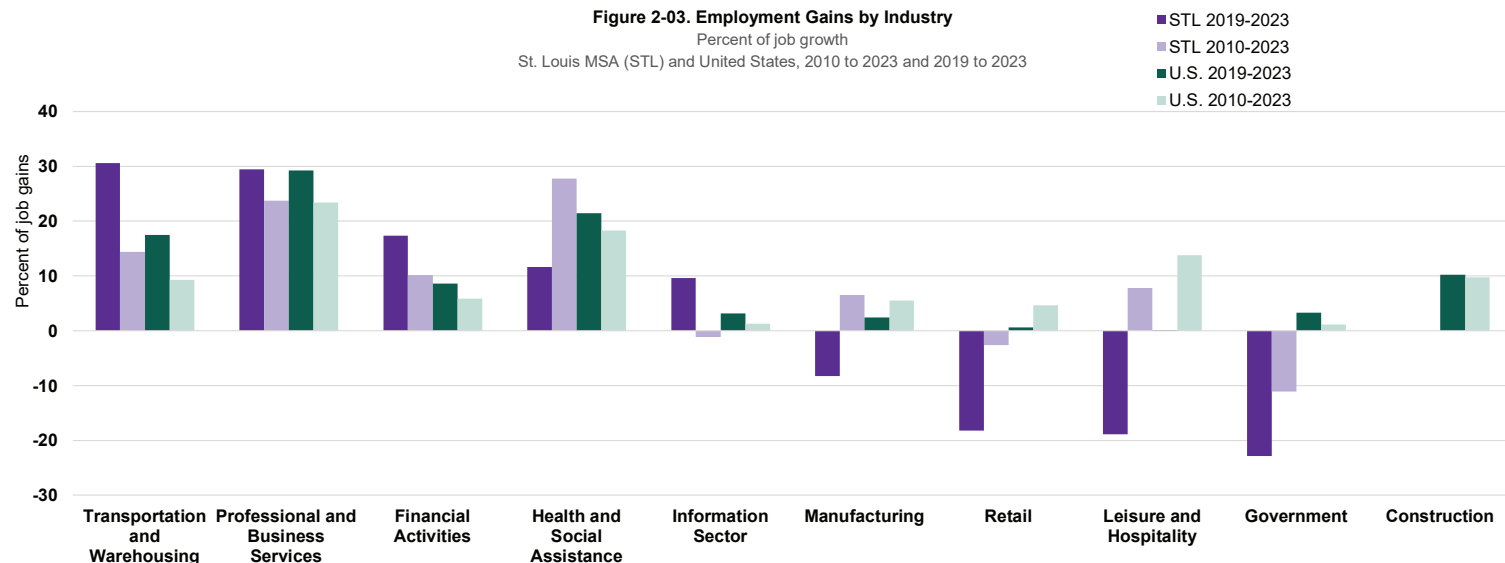
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

The largest industries in the St. Louis MSA are similar to the largest industries nationally. Health care and social assistance is the largest employer in the MSA, accounting for 15.8% of jobs. The professional and business services industry ranks closely behind, accounting for 15.4% of employment. See Table 2-02 and Figure 2-04.

In the nine years leading up to the pandemic, the region experienced an annual average increase of 1% in employment. From 2019 to 2023, the average was less than half that, 0.4% but included a loss of 5.3% in 2020.

Most sectors had recovered from pandemic losses as of 2023, but jobs in government, leisure and hospitality, retail, and manufacturing were lower than in 2019. Government was on the decline prior to the pandemic but the other three had seen increases in employment from 2010 to 2019. The transportation and warehousing industry was the only industry that grew from 2019 to 2020, by 7.9%, compared to an annual average of 3.4% in the prior nine years.

Table 2-02. Employment by Industry

St. Louis MSA, 2010, 2019, and 2023

	Employment			Average Annual Percent Change			
	2010	2019	2023	2010-2019	2019-2020	2019-2023	2010-2023
Health and Social Assistance	186,142	222,667	225,267	2.2	-3.7	0.3	1.6
Professional and Business Services	186,783	213,592	220,167	1.6	-3.6	0.8	1.4
Government	168,025	157,467	152,367	-0.7	-3.6	-0.8	-0.7
Leisure and Hospitality	137,558	152,733	148,525	1.2	-21.5	-0.9	0.6
Retail	136,858	137,200	133,142	0.0	-5.7	-0.8	-0.2
Manufacturing	108,017	119,075	117,233	1.1	-4.4	-0.4	0.7
Financial Activities	82,217	92,625	96,500	1.4	-1.1	1.1	1.3
Transportation and Warehousing	44,242	57,667	64,483	3.4	7.9	2.7	3.5
Information Sector	30,858	27,167	29,317	-1.3	-5.8	2.1	-0.4
Total Employment	1,288,125	1,406,683	1,428,992	1.0	-5.3	0.4	0.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Figure 2-04. Employment by Industry
Percent of total employment
St. Louis MSA and United States, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics
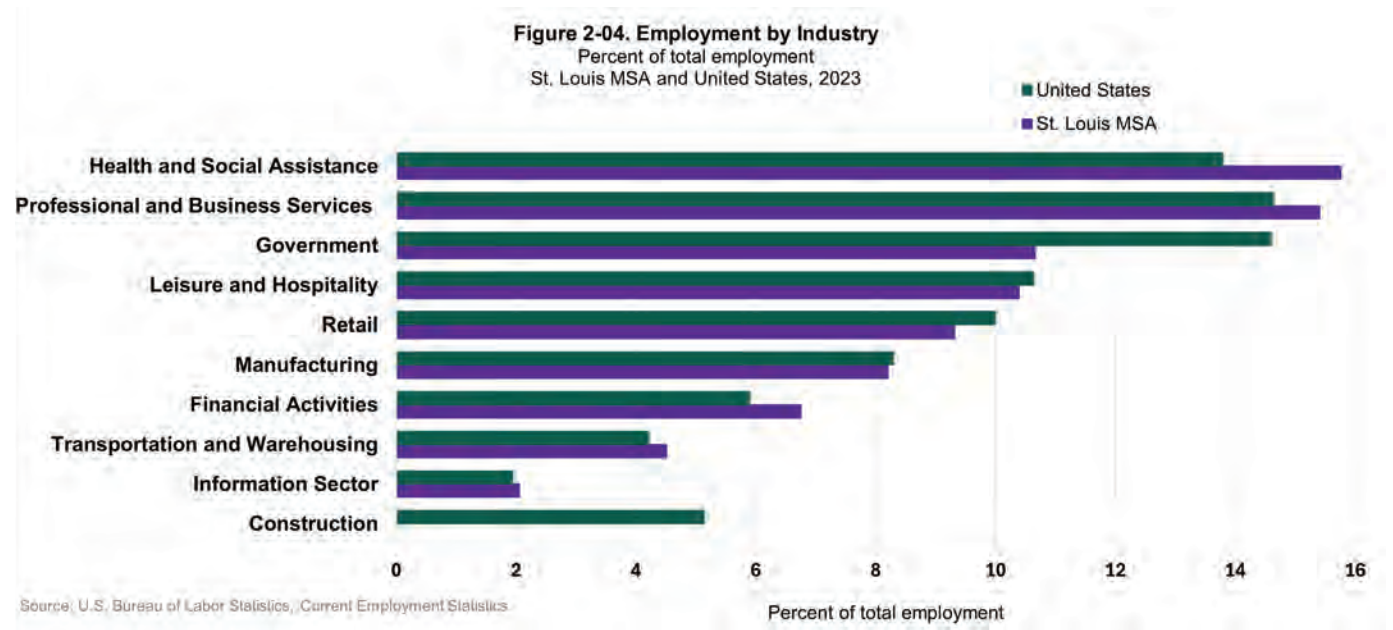
EWG Region Analysis: Employment

Federal employment data present an ambiguous view of employment trends in the EWG region with CES and BEA showing an increase, and QCEW indicating a decrease in recent years. The two estimates appear to vary in part because of differences in the types of jobs included in their estimates.

This section provides an overview of the data sources and how they differ as well as the data from both sources. For a greater understanding of the nuances of this data, see Box 2-01 (Page 16). For even more detail, see the working paper at www.ewgateway.org/wws

The two sources that provide county-level data generally suggest that employment in the region has increased since 2019. Yet, there are differences in county-level trends, and the two data sources provide different pieces to the overall portrait.

Table 2-03 provides employment estimates reported by BEA, including both proprietors (business owners) and payroll employment for 2019 and 2022.

Table 2-04 provides employment estimates as reported by QCEW. Unlike BEA, this data is only for payroll employment because QCEW only includes employment that is covered by the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. Data is shown for 2019 to 2022 to allow a comparison with BEA. Data is also provided for 2023, to offer a timelier estimate, although this data is subject to revision. As of September 2024, the 2023 data went through an initial revision in June and will undergo a final revision in February 2025.

Table 2-03. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) Employment Estimates

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2019 and 2022

Total Employment (Payroll and Proprietors)

	2019	2022	Percent Change, 2019-2022
Madison	132,901	139,190	4.7
Monroe	13,086	14,092	7.7
St. Clair	126,959	130,305	2.6
Franklin	55,522	57,273	3.2
Jefferson	73,567	77,610	5.5
St. Charles	210,374	227,982	8.4
St. Louis	805,614	829,047	2.9
City of St. Louis	291,562	297,058	1.9
EWG Region	1,709,585	1,772,557	3.7
St. Louis MSA	1,790,759	1,858,091	3.8

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Table 2-04. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employment Estimates

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2019, 2022, and 2023

	Total Employment (Payroll only)			Percent Change		
	2019	2022	2023	2019-2022	2019-2023	2022-2023
Madison	101,531	101,735	103,506	0.2	1.9	1.7
Monroe	8,456	8,560	8,590	1.2	1.6	0.4
St. Clair	92,156	89,032	90,028	-3.4	-2.3	1.1
Franklin	39,539	38,337	38,852	-3.0	-1.7	1.3
Jefferson	47,947	47,493	48,403	-0.9	1.0	1.9
St. Charles	151,936	155,852	160,581	2.6	5.7	3.0
St. Louis	610,438	589,994	597,676	-3.3	-2.1	1.3
City of St. Louis	229,800	222,214	223,562	-3.3	-2.7	0.6
EWG Region	1,281,803	1,253,217	1,271,198	-2.2	-0.8	1.4
St. Louis MSA	1,334,155	1,305,367	1,324,353	-2.2	-0.7	1.5

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Figures 2-05 through 2-13 provide the same data plus the data separately for the two types of employment included in the BEA data – proprietors and payroll.

The following are some of the key findings:

- Payroll employment for the region had not returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022 (based on both sources), nor has it rebounded based on preliminary 2023 data from QCEW.

- Compared to pre-pandemic employment levels, payroll employment growth has been strongest in St. Charles and Madison counties with both sources indicating growth from 2019 to 2022.

- The region as a whole and each county saw increases in payroll employment from 2022 to 2023, although half of the counties had not returned to pre-pandemic employment levels.

- Business ownership increased substantially in each county of the region and the region as a whole. This has offset some of the losses experienced since the onset of the pandemic. This employment makes up about 21% of regional employment.

Box 2-01: Employment Data for St. Louis MSA, Comparison of Sources

QCEW and CES data available as of September 2024, show opposite trends for the period 2019-2023 in the St. Louis MSA. CES shows a gain of about 22,000 jobs from 2019 to 2023, while QCEW shows a loss of nearly 10,000.

It is not possible at this juncture to determine how much of this difference is attributable to differences in the types of jobs covered by the two sources, and how much is attributable to a lag in integrating QCEW counts into CES estimates (which will be published in February 2025). The foregoing analysis of trends in the United States and in the peer regions was based on CES, for reasons explained in the working paper available at www.ewgateway.org/wws.

Figure 2-14 shows payroll employment from the four sources of employment data for the St. Louis MSA for the period 2010 to 2023. These sources are described on Page 9.

Figure 2-14. Employment Estimate Comparison of Sources
St. Louis MSA, 2010 to 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
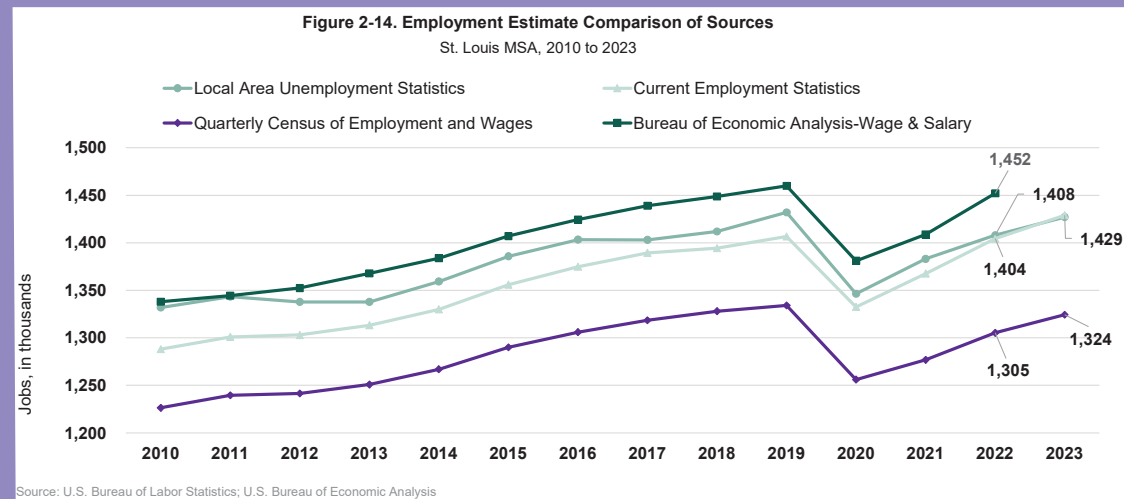
Figures 2-05 to 2-13. Employment (in thousands) by Type and Source Comparison, 2019 to 2023

Note: Scales on figures differ.

Figure 2-05. East-West Gateway Region

- Proprietors U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)
- Payroll BEA
- Total BEA
- Payroll Quarterly Census of Employment Wages (QCEW)

Figure 2-06. St. Louis County

Figure 2-07. St. Charles County

Figure 2-08. City of St. Louis

Figure 2-09. St. Clair County

Figure 2-10. Madison County

Figure 2-11. Jefferson County

Figure 2-12. Franklin County

Figure 2-13. Monroe County
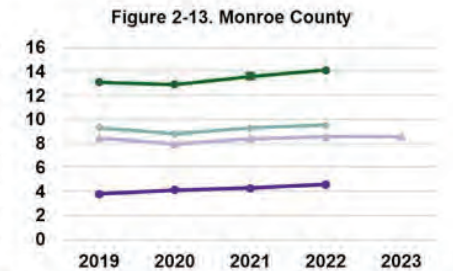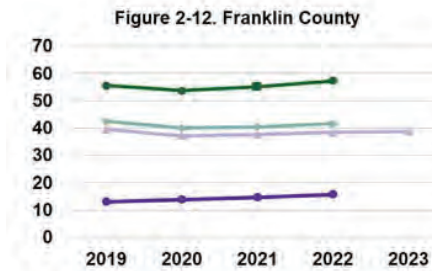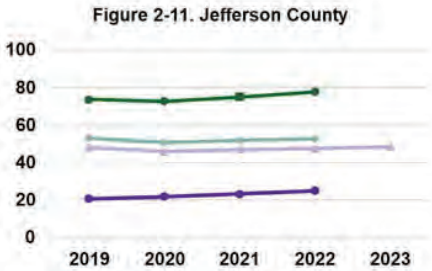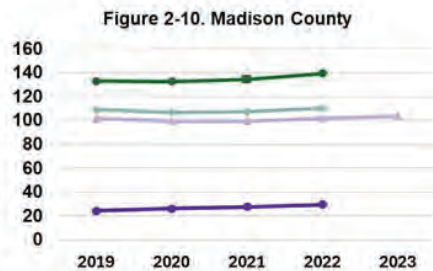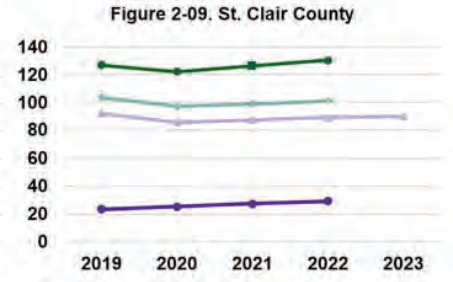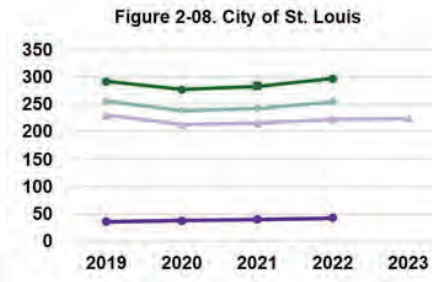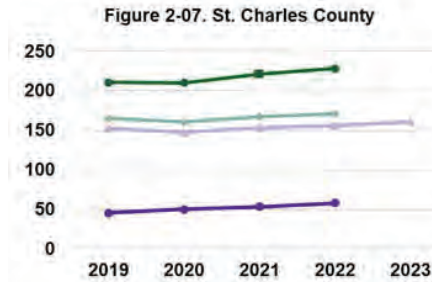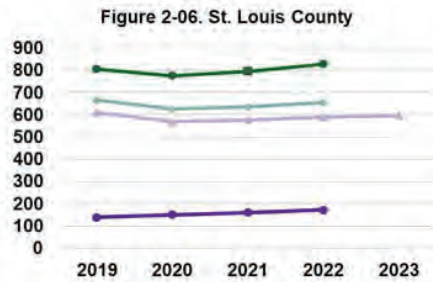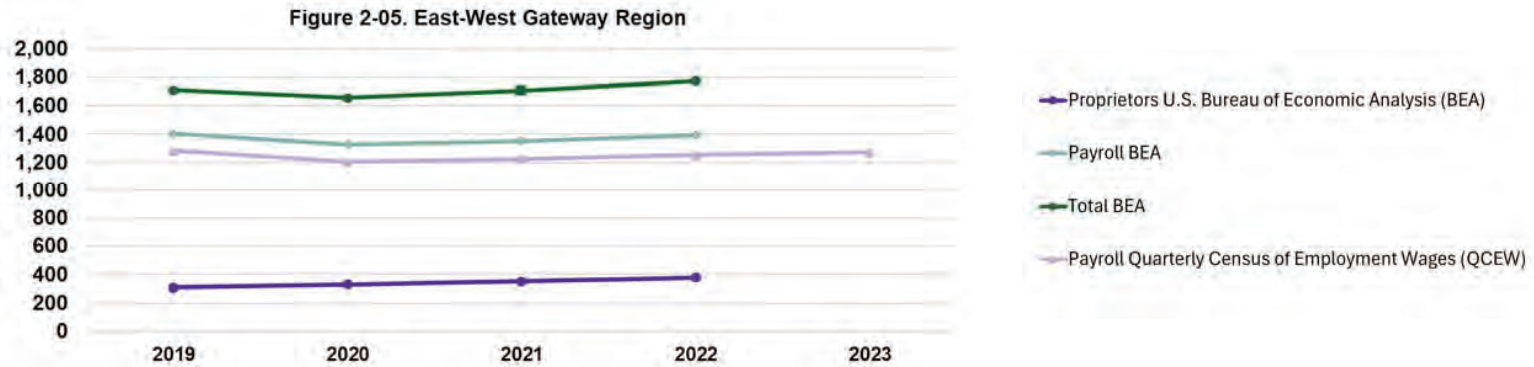
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA); U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW),

Growth

What are our goals and performance measures for growth? The following are the goals and performance measures established in East-West Gateway's long-range transportation plan (LRP), 2030 Measuring Progress from Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL), and OneSTL's regional plan for sustainability.

GSL includes population growth as one of four north star metrics with a 2030 target of increasing population by 180,000. The agency recognizes that population growth "drives a thriving regional economy" and that racial equity and inclusion are needed for a strong community. The agency tracks total population, net migration (domestic and international), and characteristics of the population, including age, race/ethnicity, and by county.

GSL recognizes that employment and population growth are intertwined, stating, "Businesses make expansion and location decisions based on access to talent. Good employment opportunities can draw and retain people in the region. An inclusive labor force strengthens households, communities, and businesses." The agency tracks employment growth in total and by industry, labor force growth, unemployment by race and ethnicity, and labor force growth by county.

The LRP also has several metrics of growth, including regional employment as a measure of economic vitality, noting the importance of an integrated transportation network for supporting businesses and the economy. The agency also tracks the employment and population living in the central core, as a measure of a vibrant downtown and central core, stating, "The core is the economic and cultural hub of the region and a major tourist attractor. Thus, the health of the core is an indicator of the health of the entire region." The LRP has aligned its definition of the core with that used by GSL in the STL2030 Jobs Plan, which cites a weak core as a central barrier to regional economic growth.

OneSTL recognizes prosperity as an integral part of a sustainable region, measuring total employment and the unemployment rate for the region under the theme of prosperous. The program also looks at specific aspects of employment, including access to jobs, and has a goal to increase population and employment around transit stations.

What are we doing for growth? The following are a sampling of activities, programs, plans, and studies.

The **International Institute of St. Louis** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping immigrants and refugees settle in the St. Louis region. They provide services such as language education, job placement, and cultural orientation to facilitate the integration of new residents into the community.

The **St. Louis Mosaic Project** launched in 2012 in response to an economic impact report authored by economist Jack Smith from St. Louis University. The report showed St. Louis lagging in immigrant growth and highlighted the economic benefits of increasing the foreign-born population. The program's goals are to transform St. Louis into the fastest growing major metropolitan area for immigration by 2025, to design and support regional attraction strategies, and to promote regional prosperity through immigration and innovation.

The St. Louis Federal Reserve provides analysis of population trends, including Why Is the St. Louis Metro Area Population Growing So Slowly?, which identifies economic factors, such as productivity and quality of life as key reasons for outward migration from the St. Louis region. Another article, How Does St. Louis-Area Immigration Differ from National Trends?, compares immigration trends in St. Louis to national patterns, revealing that St. Louis has a much smaller share of foreign-born residents compared to the national average.
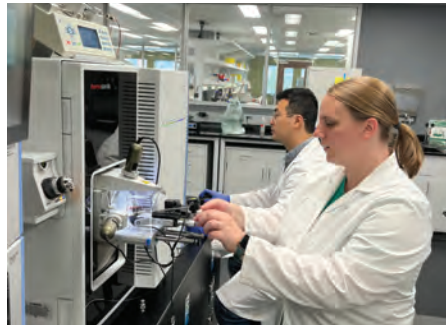
Economic and Demographic Trends by the **Missouri Economic Research and Information Center** (MERIC) provides detailed analysis of population changes within the city of St. Louis, including migration patterns and demographic shifts.

St. Louis Community College publishes annual State of the St. Louis Workforce reports that includes a survey of businesses. The 2024 report found that the greatest barrier to filling positions is a shortage of qualified workers.

The STL 2030 Jobs Plan is a 10-year roadmap to guide the region in increasing the number of quality jobs that pay living wages while reducing racial disparities in employment and wealth generation. The plan outlines five strategies to drive inclusive growth.

The **Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro St. Louis** provides tools, training, and support to increase business ownership among Hispanic and Latino persons in the St. Louis region. The organization hosts an annual jobs fair, pop up events, and other networking opportunities that meet the needs of their members.

Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center- St. Louis (AMICSTL) is a collaboration of hundreds of companies seeking to increase advanced manufacturing in the St. Louis region by connecting training and workforce development with the future job market. The organization seeks to improve the ecosystem for manufacturing companies and better prepare the regional workforce for these relatively high paying jobs.

The GeoFutures Coalition brings together academic, industry, and government initiatives in support of the growth of the geospatial ecosystem in St. Louis, which already consists of 350 companies. The growing ecosystem includes NGA West, the Taylor Geospatial Institutes, and 80 geospatial companies, as well as workforce development programs, accelerator programs, and applied research projects.

The **Where We Stand** series tracks population and employment trends in the St. Louis region. Recent publications highlighted the change in population from 2010 to 2020, including the change in the racial and ethnic composition of communities. Updates on population estimates for 2018, 2019, and 2020 tracked the slow regional population growth. Another update reviewed the employment changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, how the changes compared to previous recessions and the effects on different industries and population groups, including a specific look at the effect on working-parent households.

What else is St. Louis doing? *Tell us what to add to the database of regional goals, performance measures, activities, plans, programs, and studies at www.ewgateway.org/wws*

LIVABILITY

RACIAL SEGREGATION   VACANCY

HOMEOWNERSHIP   CRIME

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY   INFANT MORTALITY

Racial Segregation

St. Louis is one of the most segregated regions among Black and white residents. The effects of more than a century of national and local exclusionary racial housing policies continue to drive segregated housing patterns not just in St. Louis, but in other regions across the country. Segregation results in disparate access to critical resources such as high performing schools, healthy food, healthcare services, employment, retail, social networks, and safe and thriving neighborhoods. Segregation in St. Louis leads to significant negative health outcomes for Black residents, which affects life expectancy, infant mortality rates, and access to amenities. Regions with higher rates of segregation typically have worse outcomes for Black residents in comparison to white residents.

Measuring Success: Racial Segregation

What is being measured? The dissimilarity index measures the segregation of two groups. An index score of 100 indicates complete segregation. A fully integrated community would have a score of 0.

A nuance of this index is that it can only measure segregation of two racial groups. For the St. Louis region, there is a rationale for focusing on white and Black residents because Black residents have historically experienced housing discrimination with lingering effects. Whites and Blacks are also the two largest racial groups in the region. However, other racial and ethnic groups make up a significant and growing proportion of the region's population and are important to consider as well.

What makes this a good measure of success? Segregation affects regional economies, communities, and individuals. Segregated communities tend to provide residents with different levels of service, resources, and access to amenities. This is evidenced by a strong association with disparities between Black and white population groups in the peer regions. Higher segregation is also associated with slower growth in per capita income.[3-01]

What is problematic about this measure? There are several ways in which reliance on a single metric can obscure nuances. First, the level of integration does not directly reflect quality of life in a community, or disparities in access to basic services and amenities. Second, regions can appear more integrated than others because they lack racial diversity. Third, conclusions can change depending on the level of geography that is used for analysis. A community may appear integrated when viewed as a whole, but a more granular analysis may reveal higher levels of segregation. This is particularly relevant to parts of the St. Louis region where communities may appear integrated, even though segregated housing patterns remain apparent at the block level.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"A successful region works across age/economic/ race/gender demographics" –City of St. Louis Resident

"There should not be segregation, divides, and 'othering' of the community." –St. Charles County Resident

3-01 Li, Huiping, Harrison Campbell, and Steven Fernandez. 2013. Residential Segregation, Spatial Mismatch and Economic

growth across US Metropolitan Areas. Urban Studies 50(13): 2642-2660.

Peer Region Analysis: Racial Segregation

The most racially segregated peer regions for Black and white residents are largely in the Midwest and the Northeast, including the **St. Louis** MSA. Los Angeles is among the 10 most segregated, but its high segregation is likely due, in part, to its relatively small Black population. **Las Vegas** is the least segregated and is among the most diverse of the peer regions with 17.5% of the population not in the three largest population groups (white, Black, and Hispanic).[3-02]

Many highly segregated peer regions share a similar history. They were destinations during the Great Migration of 1910 to 1970 when millions of Black residents left the South. During this period, exclusionary housing policies such as racially motivated deed covenants, local and federal lending policies including redlining, and zoning laws accelerated segregation. Beginning in the 1970s, these metropolitan regions were hit hard by a national decline in manufacturing employment and have experienced slow population growth for several decades.[3-03]

Regional ranks on segregation are associated with ranks on some other vitality metrics. Regions that are relatively less segregated tend to have lower rates of concentrated poverty, more population growth, and less disparity between the Black and white population groups.

Segregation has remained prevalent nationally, and in the **St. Louis** MSA, with modest decreases in recent years. From 2006-2010 to 2018-2022, segregation decreased by 2.3 points in the St. Louis MSA and by 1.9 points nationally. There was considerable variability among the peer regions. Just nine regions experienced increases in Black-white segregation with the largest occurring in **San Jose** (3.7 points), **Salt Lake City** (1.4 points), and **Jacksonville** (1.2 points). The largest decreases occurred in **Kansas City** (-6.6 points), **Tampa** (-6.1 points), and **Detroit** (-5.5 points).

3-02 Update 10: 2020 Decennial Census: Population, Race, and Ethnicity. Where We Stand: 8th Edition, January 2022. https://www.ewgateway.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/wws08_update10_2020_Decennial-Census_Population_Race_and_Ethnicity_2022-01_final.pdf
3-03 Wilson, William Julius. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. University of Chicago Press.

Racial Segregation

Black-white segregation scores based on the dissimilarity index, 2018-2022

1	Milwaukee	78.7
2	New York	75.3
3	Chicago	74.2
4	Cleveland	73.1
5	Detroit	72.1
6	St. Louis	70.6
7	Buffalo	69.3
8	Philadelphia	66.8
9	Cincinnati	66.4
10	Los Angeles	65.7
United States		65.6
11	Pittsburgh	64.8
12	Miami	64.6
13	Hartford	64.5
14	Boston	63.7
15	Indianapolis	63.6
16	Denver	63.3
17	Birmingham	62.9
18	Columbus	62.7
19	New Orleans	61.9
20	Baltimore	61.9
21	Washington, D.C.	61.1
22	Memphis	61.0
23	Atlanta	60.4
24	San Francisco	59.9
25	Houston	59.9
26	Louisville	57.8
27	Kansas City	57.7
28	Sacramento	57.7
29	Providence	56.2
30	Minneapolis	56.1
31	Salt Lake City	55.3
32	Dallas	54.8
33	Jacksonville	54.7
34	San Diego	54.2
35	Orlando	53.3
36	Tampa	53.2
37	Nashville	52.9
38	Seattle	52.6
39	Charlotte	52.6
40	Richmond	52.3
41	Oklahoma City	51.5
42	Portland	50.7
43	Phoenix	50.3
44	San Antonio	49.7
45	San Jose	49.7
46	Austin	48.5
47	Virginia Beach	48.2
48	Riverside	48.1
49	Raleigh	42.9
50	Las Vegas	42.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B03002)

Change in Racial Segregation

Point difference in dissimilarity index, 2006-2010 to 2018-2022

1	San Jose	3.7
2	Salt Lake City	1.4
3	Jacksonville	1.2
4	Las Vegas	0.9
5	Atlanta	0.5
6	Phoenix	0.4
7	Riverside	0.3
8	Orlando	0.2
9	Raleigh	0.1
10	Sacramento	-0.1
11	Seattle	-0.4
12	Virginia Beach	-0.4
13	Minneapolis	-0.4
14	New Orleans	-0.5
15	Columbus	-0.8
16	Louisville	-1.1
17	Miami	-1.4
18	Charlotte	-1.5
United States		-1.9
19	San Diego	-2.0
20	Providence	-2.0
21	Nashville	-2.1
22	Washington, D.C.	-2.2
23	Philadelphia	-2.2
24	St. Louis	-2.3
25	Cleveland	-2.4
26	Denver	-2.5
27	Memphis	-2.6
28	Houston	-2.6
29	Milwaukee	-2.6
30	Pittsburgh	-2.9
31	San Antonio	-3.0
32	Boston	-3.2
33	Portland	-3.4
34	Dallas	-3.4
35	Richmond	-3.5
36	Indianapolis	-3.7
37	New York	-3.7
38	Chicago	-3.8
39	Oklahoma City	-3.9
40	San Francisco	-4.3
41	Birmingham	-4.4
42	Austin	-4.5
43	Cincinnati	-4.5
44	Los Angeles	-4.6
45	Baltimore	-4.7
46	Buffalo	-4.8
47	Detroit	-5.5
48	Tampa	-6.1
49	Kansas City	-6.6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B03002)

EWG Region Analysis: Racial Segregation

Figure 3-01. Share of Regional Population
Proportion of each population group in each county
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2020

Despite a slight decrease in segregation at the regional level, the region remains highly sorted by race, as shown on Map 3-01. Black residents are highly concentrated in the northern parts of the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County and the western portion of St. Clair County. White residents make up large proportions of the population in the southern parts of the city of St. Louis and the south, central, and western parts of St. Louis County. Most communities in the other counties are predominately white, though pockets of diversity exist in every county.

Figure 3-01 shows the proportion of the total population and share of each racial and ethnic population group that resides in each county. This shows that the Black population is overrepresented in St. Louis County, the city of St. Louis, and St. Clair County while underrepresented in each of the other counties. Three-fourths of the Black population resides in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County while about half of the total regional population resides in these two jurisdictions.

The share of the Hispanic population in each county is similar to the share of total population in each county. The final group, which includes those who identify as Asian, multiracial, and other races, is also relatively equal to the share of total population with a slightly higher share in St. Louis County.

Map 3-01. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2020

I Dot = 100 Persons

- Black (Not Hispanic)
- White (Not Hispanic)
- All other races and ethnicities

Dots are randomly placed within 2020 Census blocks. Tract boundaries are not shown on the map.
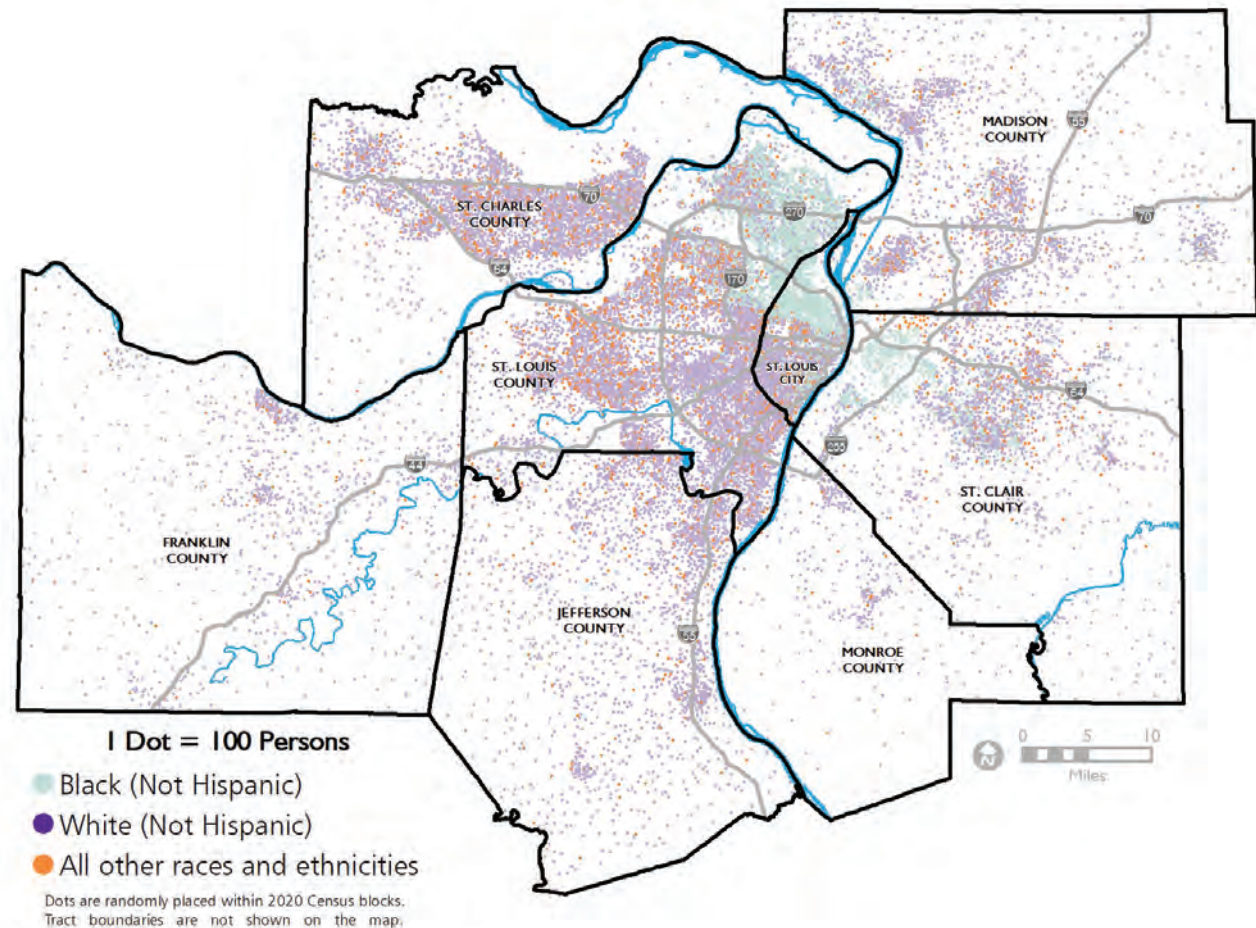
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 State Resisting Data; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Measures of Racial and Ethnic Disparity

A Note on Measures of Racial and Ethnic Disparity

Since the first edition of WWS, EWG has been including measures of racial disparity, recognizing that the inequitable distribution of burdens and benefits among population groups is an important part of any assessment of regional competitiveness. EWG has been using the ratio of the Black to white value (the multiplicative rate) to measure racial disparity among the peer regions. This method provides useful information, but it is only a piece of the story. Additional data can provide a more complete picture by including other population groups that face disparities as well as more detail on the differences between population groups.

Leading up to this publication, EWG research staff reviewed the ratio method and nine alternate methods or ways of depicting racial and ethnic disparity. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of the different methods, their uses, and their results as well as to determine the best way of capturing racial disparity in St. Louis and the peer regions.

Based on this analysis, this report includes the following three methods of measuring racial disparity: mathematical ratios, mathematical differences, and an alternate measure known as excess burdens. Each of these methods is applied to two topic areas: homeownership and infant mortality. Using this approach allows us to continue to focus on disparities between Black and white residents, which remains the largest racial divide in the United States and in St. Louis. In addition, incorporating the excess burdens metric allows us to recognize disparities experienced by other racial and ethnic groups.

In this section, details are provided for the three methods as well as the benefits and challenges of each. The homeownership (see Page 28) and infant mortality sections (see Page 52), include a discussion of these metrics along with the data for the entire population.

Definitions/Methods

Method 1: Ratio in Black-White Rates.
Definition/Calculation: Ratio = Black Value/White Value (order of Black/white switches depending on metric). This measure can be expressed as saying that the rate (or value) for the Black population is x times greater than that of the white population.

Summary of benefits and drawbacks: This method is a simple calculation and is easy to understand. It provides the relative magnitude of disparity. However, it only considers two racial groups at a time and does not consider the size of the population groups or the absolute magnitude of the gap between population groups. Another drawback is that two peer regions are usually excluded from the rankings because the Black population is too small to be included.

Method 2: Difference in Values

Definition/Calculation:
Difference = White Population Metric Value - Black Population Metric Value (order of Black/white switches depending on metric).
And
Difference = White Population Metric Value - Hispanic or Latino Population Metric Value (order of Hispanic/white switches depending on metric).

Summary of benefits and drawbacks: This method is easy to understand. Like the ratio method, this method provides the relative magnitude of the difference between the two values. In addition, this method provides the absolute difference between the two values. Another benefit of this method is it is used by Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL) in measuring racial disparity in their north star metrics and targets.

Method 3: Excess People with Burdens (or Lacking Benefits) Compared to Most Well-Off Group

Definition/Calculation:
- Apply the rate of the most favorable population to the total population = hypothetical population
- Subtract the hypothetical from the actual = excess population
- Take the excess population as a percent of the total population of interest = the percent of the total population that is burdened (or lacking benefit) that would not be if all population groups had the same rate as the most well-off population group.

Summary of benefits and drawbacks: This method considers multiple population groups and the size of those groups. However, it is challenging to understand and communicate. It may be best used when the components can be discussed individually to see which population groups are most affected. Another drawback is that it may diminish the disparities faced by population groups that are small in number.

Why are these good measures of regional success?
In summary, each of these methods provides a reliable and valid measure of racial and ethnic differences. The ratio and difference methods provide comparisons between two racial groups and give easy-to-understand estimates expressing degrees of difference between groups. The excess method provides one estimate to compare overall racial and ethnic disparities in regions.

Why are these measures problematic or poor measures of regional success?
Two methods used, ratio and difference method, only take two population groups into account at once and they do not consider the size of the population groups. This results in an incomplete picture of disparity across regions.

The third method addresses these two challenges, but the excess measure has several problems as well. This method is complicated, it assumes that the highest rate of the best-off population group is the optimal rate, and it fails to show the degree of disparity for each group.

In addition, there are a few challenges that apply to all three of the methods used in this report.
1. Race is a social construct that cannot be verified. The categories of race and how people identify change over time. How people are grouped together can make a difference in the outcomes we see in the data.
2. It is important to consider the base values. For example, is the homeownership rate of the entire population what is desired? Similarly, is the rate of the best-off population group good or what is wanted?
3. Regions that lack diversity can show up as outliers, either high or low, or not be included at all.

Homeownership

St. Louis has the 4th highest homeownership rate among the peer regions, but there are wide disparities in the rates by county and by race. Its high ownership rate is partially the result of relatively high-income levels and relatively low housing costs. The lower costs are in part caused by more balanced housing supply and demand. Homeownership is an important measure of household wealth and can signal investment in a community. High homeownership rates are associated with lower regional housing costs and better cost-to-income ratios.

Measuring Success: Homeownership

What is being measured? The homeownership rate represents owner-occupied units as a percent of all occupied housing units. Racial and ethnic disparity in homeownership is the difference in rates between population groups. For more on the definitions and interpretations of the three disparity methods used here see Page 26. The main population groups discussed here are white (not Hispanic or Latino, referred to as "white"), Black (not Hispanic or Latino, referred to as "Black"), and Hispanic or Latino (referred to as "Hispanic").

What makes this a good measure of success? Homeownership is a key means for individuals and families to build wealth. It is sometimes used as a proxy for wealth. Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL) adopted homeownership as a north star metric with the goal of closing the racial homeownership disparity gap to enable "more St. Louisans to build equity."[4-01] There is also evidence that homeownership is conducive to civic participation and the formation of social capital in communities.[4-02] Further, homeownership typically requires people to have the ability to save funds for a down payment, which suggests that homeowners have a stable financial foundation.

At the regional level, a high ownership rate is an indication that housing is attainable for most households. Regions with high ranks on ownership generally have favorable ranks on measures of housing affordability.

Racial disparity in homeownership is important because of the long history of systemic racial housing segregation in the country and its detrimental effect on the ability of families to accumulate wealth.

What is problematic about this measure? At a regional level, a high homeownership rate does not clearly indicate broad success. Regions with the highest homeownership rates are generally below average on population and employment growth, although there are exceptions. Further, the overall rate does not consider racial disparities. The racial disparity metrics have their own set of challenges, which are discussed on Page 26.

On an individual level, homeownership as a measure of success may be misguided for a few reasons. A societal value on homeownership may encourage ownership at the expense of better wealth-building strategies, or it may place people in precarious financial positions due to housing costs and loan terms that they cannot truly afford. The rate also does not consider personal preferences on renting or other options beyond homeownership. Finally, the overall rate does not consider the quality of homes or communities in which ownership is available.

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"It needs stable, safe, reasonably well-off multi-generational communities who own their own homes…"
–City of St. Louis Resident

"My daughter is a nurse…houses are so expensive that she doesn't know if she will be able to buy one."
–St. Charles County Resident

4-01 Greater St. Louis Inc. Measuring Growth - STL 2030 Progress. https://stl2030progress.com/measuring-growth/
4-02 Brian McCabe, 2013. Are homeowners better citizens? Homeownership and Community Participation in the United States. Social Forces 91(3): 929-954.

Peer Region Analysis: Homeownership

The regions with the highest home-ownership rates are mostly those with moderate or slow population growth. However, some high-growth regions, including **Raleigh, Salt Lake City,** and **Jacksonville** also rank among the top 15 peer regions. The regional rankings on disparity metrics also vary and do not have strong relationships with regional rankings on other vitality metrics. The regional rankings on the three methods of calculating racial and ethnic disparity also vary from each other, indicating that one metric cannot adequality provide regional comparisons on racial disparity. Peer regions with relatively high homeownership rates generally have more affordable housing. The regional rankings for housing affordability strongly correlate with homeownership rankings as exemplified by **St. Louis, Raleigh, Birmingham, Pittsburgh,** and **Louisville** which all rank among the 10 most favorable on affordability and homeownership.

Regions with the lowest homeownership rates, including **Miami, San Francisco, San Jose,** and **Los Angeles** tend to have relatively unaffordable housing. They have experienced relatively low population growth in recent years (2019 to 2023) and tend to be unfavorable on net migration. However, they also tend to be among the most favorable when ranked by average wage per job and income per capita.

Rankings on homeownership rates are mixed for Midwestern regions. **Detroit, Minneapolis,** and **Cincinnati** join **St. Louis** at the top of the rankings with some of the highest rates. **Chicago** and **Kansas City** have about the same rate as the United States, and **Columbus** and **Milwaukee** are in the bottom third of regions.

Homeownership

Owner-occupied units as a percent of all occupied housing units, 2022

1	**Detroit**	**71.5**
2	Minneapolis	70.5
3	Pittsburgh	70.5
4	**St. Louis**	**69.7**
5	Birmingham	69.5
6	Louisville	69.2
7	Cincinnati	69.1
8	Raleigh	67.8
9	Salt Lake City	67.6
10	Richmond	67.6
11	Indianapolis	67.5
12	Baltimore	67.3
13	Jacksonville	67.2
14	Tampa	67.0
15	Philadelphia	66.9
16	Phoenix	66.7
17	Cleveland	66.6
18	Atlanta	66.5
19	Hartford	66.5
20	Buffalo	66.1
21	New Orleans	65.9
22	Charlotte	65.8
23	Riverside	65.8
24	Chicago	65.4
25	Kansas City	65.3
United States		**65.2**
26	Nashville	65.0
27	Denver	64.5
28	Virginia Beach	64.2
29	Washington, D.C.	63.9
30	San Antonio	63.5
31	Oklahoma City	63.3
32	Sacramento	62.8
33	Providence	62.8
34	Orlando	61.9
35	Portland	61.6
36	Boston	61.5
37	Columbus	61.2
38	Memphis	60.8
39	Houston	60.5
40	Dallas	60.2
41	Milwaukee	60.1
42	Miami	59.9
43	Seattle	59.8
44	Austin	58.8
45	Las Vegas	57.8
46	San Francisco	56.2
47	San Jose	54.9
48	San Diego	54.5
49	New York	51.7
50	**Los Angeles**	**47.9**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25003)

Racial Disparity in Homeownership Rates

While the peer region rankings on the three methods of calculating racial disparity vary, general conclusions can be made.

Disparities among population groups exist across the country, based on all three methods. This is true even in the following regions, which have the smallest disparities for each method:

- Ratio method: The most favorably ranked region was **Washington, D.C.**, where white households are 1.36 times more likely to own a home than Black households.
- Percentage point difference, Black and white: **Washington, D.C.** was again the most favorable, with a difference of 19 points.
- Percentage point difference, Hispanic and white: **Austin** was most favorable, with a difference of 10.9 points.
- Excess: In **Salt Lake City,** an additional 3% of households would own their homes if all population groups had the rate of the best-off group.

Further, the homeownership disparities faced by the Black populations across the country are substantial. Among the peer regions, the highest homeownership rate for a regional Black population was 54.2% in Richmond. The ownership rates for the white populations were higher than this in every region.

All of the Midwestern peer regions have disparities among Black and white households in homeownership that are greater than the national average. This is true whether using the difference method or the ratio method. In many of these regions, the Great Migration brought large numbers of African Americans into increasingly segregated communities between 1910 and 1970. Regions with similar histories, such as **Pittsburgh, Louisville,** and **Buffalo** are also above the national average on disparities. Three western regions, **Seattle, Portland,** and **Las Vegas,** also rank among the 10 most disparate regions for homeownership by either method. A fourth western region, **San Diego,** ranks 9th on the ratio of white to Black homeownership, but ranks 20th on the difference between white and Black homeownership rates. The difference is due to the relatively low overall rate of homeownership in **San Diego.**

Racial Disparity in Homeownership

Ratio of non-Hispanic Black to non-Hispanic white, owner-occupied units as a percent of all occupied units, 2022

#	Region	Value
1	Milwaukee	2.69
2	Minneapolis	2.50
3	Portland	2.35
4	Pittsburgh	2.16
5	Columbus	2.10
6	Seattle	2.09
7	Cincinnati	2.08
8	Las Vegas	2.06
9	San Diego	2.05
10	Louisville	1.97
11	New York	1.95
12	Cleveland	1.90
13	Oklahoma City	1.89
14	San Francisco	1.88
15	Kansas City	1.84
16	Buffalo	1.83
17	Phoenix	1.82
18	Chicago	1.81
19	Boston	1.81
20	Indianapolis	1.81
21	Los Angeles	1.80
22	Dallas	1.77
23	St. Louis	1.75
24	Detroit	1.73
25	Charlotte	1.71
26	Houston	1.68
27	Sacramento	1.68
28	Memphis	1.68
29	Hartford	1.67
30	Riverside	1.67
	United States	1.65
31	Baltimore	1.64
32	Nashville	1.64
33	San Antonio	1.63
34	Denver	1.63
35	Providence	1.62
36	Tampa	1.58
37	Virginia Beach	1.58
38	Miami	1.57
39	Philadelphia	1.56
40	Jacksonville	1.55
41	Austin	1.55
42	Birmingham	1.54
43	Orlando	1.53
44	New Orleans	1.52
45	Raleigh	1.49
46	Atlanta	1.45
47	Richmond	1.40
48	Washington, D.C.	1.36

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Racial Disparity in Homeownership

Percentage point difference, Black (Not Hispanic or Latino) and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2022

#	Region	Value
1	Minneapolis	46.0
2	Milwaukee	43.8
3	Pittsburgh	40.1
4	Cincinnati	39.3
5	Portland	37.9
6	Louisville	37.8
7	Columbus	36.1
8	Cleveland	35.8
9	Las Vegas	34.2
10	Seattle	34.1
11	Detroit	34.0
12	Oklahoma City	33.5
13	Chicago	33.4
14	Indianapolis	33.2
15	Phoenix	33.1
16	St. Louis	32.8
17	Buffalo	32.7
18	Kansas City	32.5
19	New York	32.4
20	San Diego	32.1
21	Charlotte	31.5
22	Memphis	31.2
23	Boston	30.8
24	Baltimore	30.7
25	Hartford	30.7
26	Dallas	30.2
27	Riverside	29.9
28	San Francisco	29.3
29	Houston	29.1
	United States	28.7
30	Sacramento	28.1
31	San Antonio	28.0
32	Birmingham	27.9
33	Nashville	27.8
34	Virginia Beach	27.7
35	Miami	27.0
36	Philadelphia	26.9
37	Denver	26.9
38	Jacksonville	26.8
38	Tampa	26.8
40	New Orleans	26.2
41	Providence	26.2
42	Los Angeles	25.1
43	Raleigh	24.7
44	Orlando	24.6
45	Atlanta	24.2
46	Austin	22.5
47	Richmond	21.7
48	Washington, D.C.	19.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Regions with the smallest disparities among Black and white households in homeownership rates are all in or near the South. **Washington, D.C.; Richmond; Atlanta; Raleigh; New Orleans;** and **Orlando** are among the 10 regions with narrower disparities using either the ratio or difference method.

While not as wide, the homeownership gaps for Hispanic and Latino populations are also sizable. St. Louis and Detroit have the highest ownership rates for the Hispanic and Latino populations, but the population group makes up a small proportion in each region. The regions with the next two largest ownership rates for Hispanic and Latino population groups are **Riverside** and **San Antonio**, which have the largest Hispanic populations among the peer regions. In each, the population group makes up more than 50% of the total population.

The five regions with the greatest disparity in homeownership between non-Hispanic white and Hispanic households are all in the Northeast: **Buffalo, Hartford, Boston, New York,** and **Providence. St. Louis** is among the five regions with the smallest disparities in white-Hispanic homeownership; the other four are all in the Southwest: **Austin, San Antonio, Dallas,** and **Riverside.**

Finally, when all race and ethnic groups are considered, the disparity rankings for the peer regions change. To account for the varying racial and ethnic compositions of the peer regions, the excess method considers the disparity faced by people of all races and ethnicities. Most of the regions with the largest disparities based on this metric do not rank at the top on the other metrics of disparity. The excess method is sensitive to the size of the population groups. Therefore, this method provides an estimation of the percent of the total population facing disparities. The regions with the highest disparities based on this metric are mixed with at least one peer region from each quadrant of the United States in the top 15 as well as some regions that are very diverse (based on the diffusion score) and some that are relatively not diverse. See Map 4-01.

Ethnic Disparity in Homeownership

Percentage point difference, Hispanic or Latino and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2022

1	Buffalo	40.6
2	Hartford	37.2
3	Boston	36.4
4	New York	36.3
5	Providence	33.8
6	Nashville	31.6
7	Memphis	30.4
8	Columbus	29.4
9	Richmond	29.0
10	Virginia Beach	28.7
11	San Jose	27.4
12	Milwaukee	26.9
13	Charlotte	26.7
14	Minneapolis	26.6
15	Cleveland	26.4
16	Baltimore	25.6
17	Portland	25.3
18	Louisville	25.2
19	Cincinnati	25.0
20	Seattle	24.5
21	Philadelphia	23.2
22	Atlanta	23.0
23	Jacksonville	23.0
24	Indianapolis	22.7
25	Oklahoma City	22.2
United States		**21.9**
26	New Orleans	21.4
27	San Diego	20.6
28	Miami	20.5
28	San Francisco	20.5
30	Raleigh	20.3
31	Sacramento	20.0
32	Detroit	19.2
33	Washington, D.C.	18.5
34	Orlando	18.1
34	Salt Lake City	18.1
36	Los Angeles	17.7
37	Houston	16.8
37	Kansas City	16.8
39	Phoenix	16.6
40	Denver	15.9
40	Las Vegas	15.9
42	Chicago	15.4
43	Tampa	15.3
44	**St. Louis**	**14.8**
45	Riverside	13.3
46	Dallas	13.2
47	San Antonio	12.4
48	**Austin**	**10.9**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Racial & Ethnic Disparity in Homeownership

Excess percentage of households lacking homeownership due to disparities, 2022

1	Memphis	16.7
2	New York	14.6
3	Miami	14.2
4	Baltimore	11.6
5	Las Vegas	11.3
6	Houston	11.3
7	Virginia Beach	10.9
8	Atlanta	10.9
9	Orlando	10.6
10	New Orleans	10.4
11	Charlotte	10.2
12	Hartford	9.5
13	Los Angeles	9.5
14	Milwaukee	9.3
15	Birmingham	9.2
16	Chicago	9.2
17	Dallas	9.1
18	Detroit	9.1
19	Cleveland	9.0
20	Riverside	8.7
21	San Antonio	8.7
22	Jacksonville	8.3
23	Philadelphia	8.2
24	San Diego	8.2
25	Richmond	8.0
United States		**7.7**
26	Washington, D.C.	7.7
27	Columbus	7.7
28	Oklahoma City	7.5
29	Tampa	7.5
30	San Jose	7.3
31	Boston	7.2
32	**St. Louis**	**7.1**
33	Louisville	7.0
34	Indianapolis	6.9
35	San Francisco	6.8
36	Nashville	6.6
37	Raleigh	6.6
38	Phoenix	6.5
39	Sacramento	6.5
40	Cincinnati	6.5
41	Minneapolis	6.0
42	Kansas City	5.8
43	Buffalo	5.7
44	Providence	5.6
45	Seattle	5.2
46	Denver	5.0
47	Austin	4.9
48	Portland	4.7
49	Pittsburgh	3.5
50	**Salt Lake City**	**3.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

Map 4-01 Racial and Ethnic Disparity in Homeownership, 2022

Percent difference in owner-occupied units from actual

3.0% — 16.7%
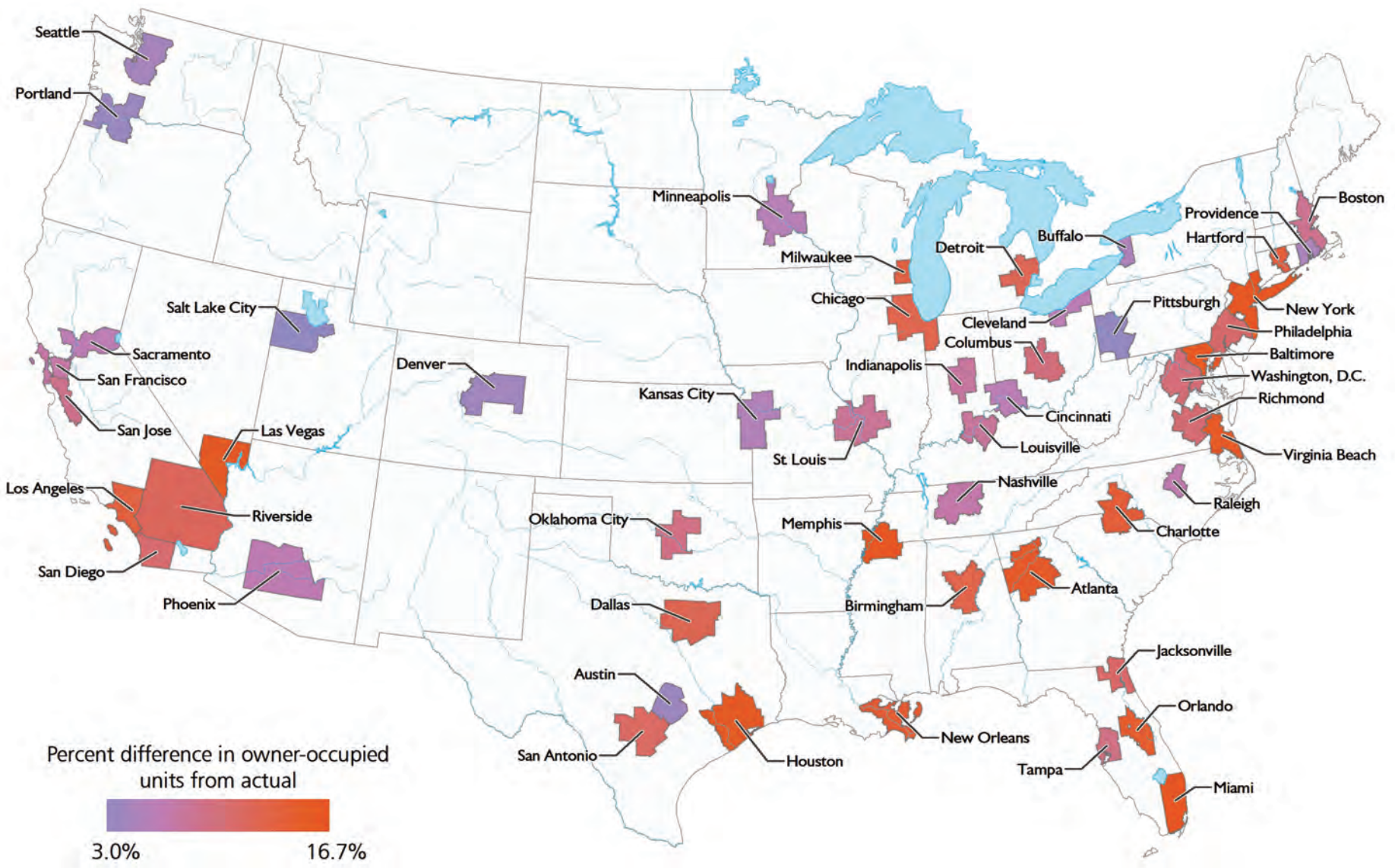
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

EWG Region Analysis: Homeownership

In the EWG region, the homeownership rate varies from county to county. In each county there is a range of ownership rates across tracts and by race. Map 4-02 provides the rates at the tract level. Most communities outside the central core have ownership rates over 55%. There are some tracts in each county where less than 55% of the homes are owner occupied, except Monroe County where the lowest rate for a tract is 70.3%.

There is substantial disparity in ownership rates by race in the region. For the region as a whole the rate for the white population is 77.1% compared to a rate of 41.2% for the Black population, a difference of 35.9 points. Table 4-01 provides the rates by county for race and ethnic population groups.

Table 4-01. Homeownership Rate by Race and Ethnicity					
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022					
	White	Black	Asian	Multiracial	Hispanic or Latino	Total population
Madison	77.6	30.8	63.1	61.9	65.4	73.1
Monroe	84.0	81.3	79.6	93.8	96.6	84.1
St. Clair	79.0	43.4	70.0	55.9	67.3	67.9
Franklin	78.5	45.8	78.2	64.8	70.9	77.6
Jefferson	81.7	43.0	88.2	69.5	61.5	80.7
St. Charles	82.8	56.1	66.1	74.2	70.8	80.7
St. Louis	77.2	45.9	58.7	65.6	56.3	68.5
City of St. Louis	56.5	32.1	31.1	37.6	40.3	44.9
EWG Region	77.1	41.2	56.6	61.8	58.8	67.6

Note: The race categories include Hispanic and Latino populations.

Source. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year (S2502)

Map 4-02. Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2018-2022

Owner Occupied Percentage
- 85% to 100%
- 70% to 85%
- 55% to 70%
- 40% to 55%
- 0% to 40%

Other Map Data
- County Boundary
- Interstate Highway
- Main Road
- Major River
- No Data
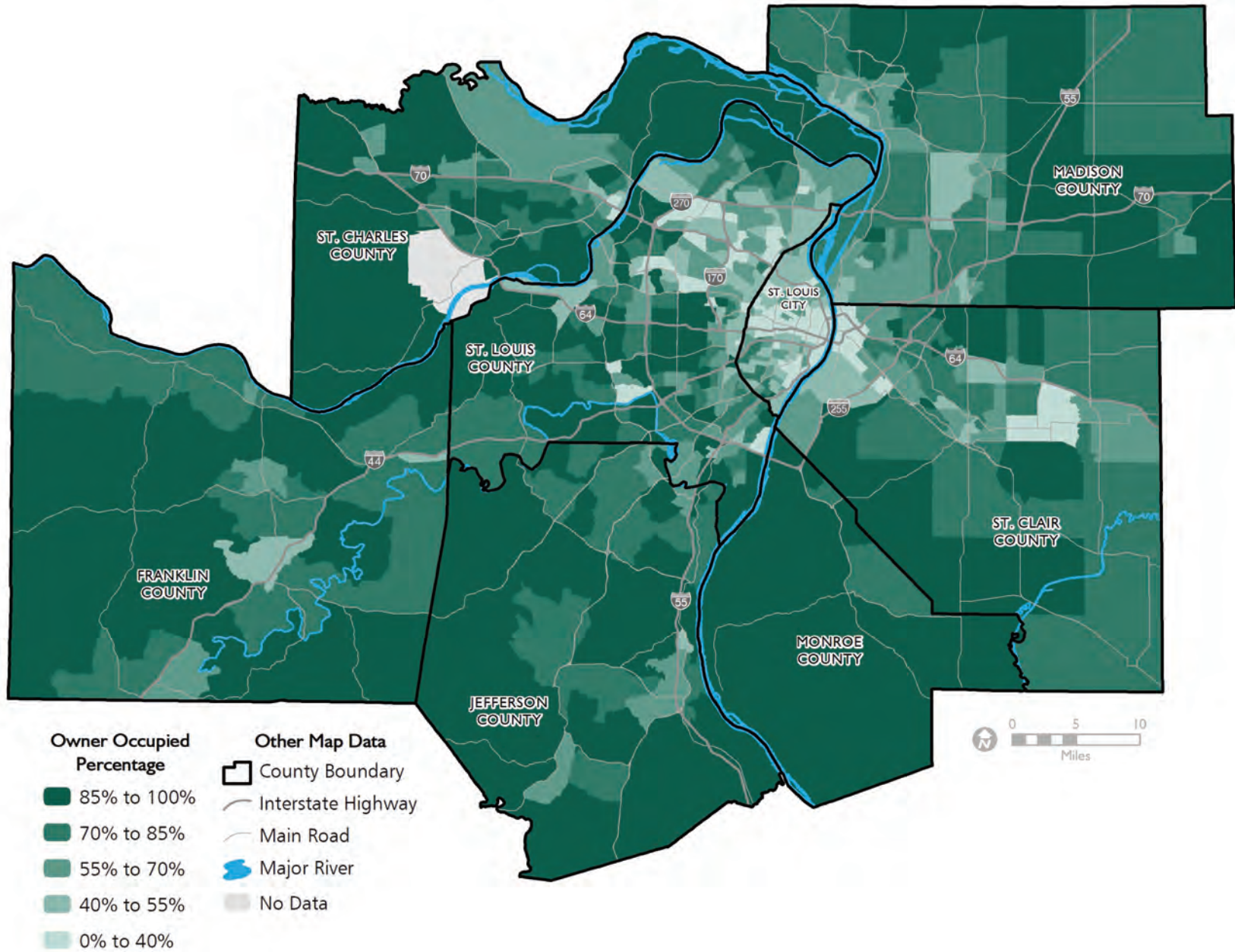
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25003), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Housing Affordability

Among the peer regions, St. Louis ranks high in housing affordability. Despite this, housing is not affordable for everyone, including nearly half of renters who pay 30% or more of their income on housing. Among the peer regions, those that are relatively unaffordable are often fast-growing and have not been able to keep up with demand. Regions in the Midwest tend to be among the most affordable. These regions also have high homeownership rates.

Measuring Success: Housing Affordability

What is being measured? The metric used for housing affordability in this report is defined as housing costs as a percent of median household income. Those paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all homeowners are considered housing cost-burdened owners, while housing cost-burdened renters are those paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all renters.

What makes this a good measure of success? Housing is often the largest expenditure for households and therefore is an indication of the overall affordability of a region. Research indicates that housing cost-burdened households are likely to experience other forms of material hardship, including food and housing insecurity, difficulty paying bills, and lack of reliable access to medical care.[5-01] Housing cost burdens are linked to poor education outcomes for children and poor employment outcomes for adults.[5-02]

What is problematic about this measure? There are several issues with using housing affordability as a measure of success. First, it does not provide insight across the income distribution. While a region may be affordable to median income households, there may be a lack of housing that is affordable to those at the 25th percentile. Similarly, an increase in the average income of households in the upper half of the income distribution would lead to an improvement on this measure even if nothing changed for households in the lower half.

The metric also does not consider the quality of housing. This can include the adequacy of the unit for the health of the occupants, neighborhood stressors such as environmental risks and crime, and access to amenities such as quality schools, healthy groceries, and health care. Focusing exclusively on housing costs also ignores transportation costs, which are closely related to housing. Finally, a high level of affordability can result from a lack of demand.

Cost-burdened metrics do not consider the income of the household, and therefore may include some higher-income households that choose to devote a greater portion of income to housing. The 30% threshold is also somewhat arbitrary and may be too high for some households.

5-01 Shamsuddin, Shomon and Colin Campbell. 2021. Housing cost burden, material hardship, and well-being. Housing Policy Debate, DOI: 10.1080/10511482.2021.1882532.
5-02 Divringi, Eileen, 2017. Rental housing affordability impacts educational and employment opportunities. Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. Cascade: An online publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. https://www.philadelphiafed.org/community-development/housing-and-neighborhoods/rental-housing-affordability-impacts-educational-and-employment-opportunities

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"A successful region has housing meeting the needs of the people" –Madison County Resident

"Welcoming, inclusive, safe, affordable housing." –St. Clair County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Housing Affordability

Regions in Florida and California score poorly on all affordability metrics. Other regions with relatively unaffordable housing include **Las Vegas, New York,** and **Boston. Miami** is the least affordable region for all three methods. **Los Angeles** is the second least affordable on two methods and ranks relatively high on cost-burdened renters. These regions also tend to rank unfavorably on homeownership and unemployment.

The regions with the most affordable housing tend to be in the Midwest, South, and the Northeast. All the Midwest peer regions except **Chicago** are more affordable than the United States as a whole for all three methods. **Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis,** and **Raleigh** are among the most affordable on all three methods. These regions tend to also have the highest homeownership rates among the peer regions, yet also have high rates of concentrated poverty. In addition, regions in the Midwest and Northeast tend to have similar development patterns, with populations migrating from central cities to suburbs.

St. Louis is one of the most affordable regions on all three measures. However, even with the 4th most affordable housing for renters, almost half (46.6%) of renters pay 30% or more of their income on housing.

Regional ranks on housing affordability are strongly related to ranks on several metrics that may influence demand for housing. Regions with less affordable housing tend to have larger foreign-born populations, less developed land per capita, and a larger proportion of second homes. Additionally, regions with larger proportions of Hispanic or Latino residents, particularly in the Sunbelt, tend to have higher housing prices.

Housing Affordability

Median housing costs as a percent of median household income, 2022

1	Miami	27.3
2	Los Angeles	27.2
3	San Diego	26.1
4	Riverside	25.1
5	Orlando	24.7
6	Las Vegas	24.4
7	New York	24.4
8	Sacramento	23.6
9	San Francisco	23.2
10	Boston	23.1
11	Tampa	23.0
12	Virginia Beach	22.9
13	Dallas	22.3
14	Portland	22.3
15	New Orleans	22.1
16	Houston	22.0
17	Seattle	22.0
18	San Jose	22.0
19	Denver	21.8
20	San Antonio	21.8
21	Austin	21.5
22	Memphis	21.0
23	Jacksonville	20.9
24	Providence	20.9
25	Phoenix	20.9
26	Atlanta	20.8
27	Chicago	20.8
28	Nashville	20.6
29	Baltimore	20.6
30	Hartford	20.5
31	Philadelphia	20.4
	United States	**20.4**
32	Washington, D.C.	20.3
33	Milwaukee	19.9
34	Charlotte	19.9
35	Columbus	19.7
36	Richmond	19.7
37	Minneapolis	19.7
38	Oklahoma City	19.4
39	Kansas City	19.4
40	Salt Lake City	19.4
41	Cleveland	19.1
42	Detroit	18.9
43	Raleigh	18.6
44	Louisville	18.5
45	Birmingham	18.4
46	Indianapolis	18.0
47	Buffalo	17.7
48	**St. Louis**	**17.7**
49	Cincinnati	17.6
50	**Pittsburgh**	**16.5**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25105, B19013)

Housing Cost-Burdened Owners

Owners paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all homeowners, 2022

1	Miami	33.7
2	Los Angeles	33.6
3	Riverside	32.4
4	San Diego	32.1
5	New York	31.9
6	San Francisco	28.8
7	Sacramento	27.7
8	Boston	26.5
9	Orlando	26.4
10	San Jose	26.0
11	Portland	25.7
12	Tampa	25.7
13	Las Vegas	25.7
14	Chicago	25.0
15	Virginia Beach	24.9
16	Seattle	24.9
17	Providence	24.8
18	New Orleans	24.7
19	San Antonio	24.7
20	Denver	24.2
21	Houston	23.8
22	Dallas	23.7
23	Philadelphia	23.2
24	Hartford	23.0
25	Baltimore	22.8
	United States	**22.8**
26	Jacksonville	21.9
27	Washington, D.C.	21.9
28	Austin	21.9
29	Detroit	21.3
30	Memphis	21.0
31	Milwaukee	20.7
32	Phoenix	20.5
33	Kansas City	20.5
34	Atlanta	20.4
35	Minneapolis	20.1
36	Nashville	20.1
37	Cleveland	20.0
38	Oklahoma City	19.7
39	Salt Lake City	19.3
40	Richmond	19.3
41	Buffalo	19.1
42	Louisville	18.8
43	Columbus	18.4
44	Charlotte	18.3
45	Birmingham	17.7
46	**St. Louis**	**17.7**
47	Indianapolis	17.7
48	Cincinnati	17.6
49	Pittsburgh	17.2
50	**Raleigh**	**17.0**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25091)

Housing Cost-Burdened Renters

Renters paying at least 30% of income on housing as a percent of all renters, 2022

1	Miami	64.6
2	Orlando	60.6
3	Riverside	60.2
4	Sacramento	59.1
5	Las Vegas	58.3
6	San Diego	58.3
7	Los Angeles	58.2
8	New Orleans	58.2
9	Tampa	57.6
10	Virginia Beach	55.7
11	San Antonio	55.4
12	Birmingham	54.2
13	Memphis	53.9
14	Phoenix	53.9
15	Richmond	53.7
16	Houston	53.5
17	Dallas	53.5
18	Boston	53.3
19	Jacksonville	53.2
20	Atlanta	53.2
21	Hartford	53.0
22	Baltimore	53.0
23	Portland	52.6
24	New York	52.6
25	Denver	52.0
	United States	**51.9**
26	Philadelphia	51.8
27	Detroit	51.7
28	Nashville	51.2
29	Minneapolis	51.0
30	Indianapolis	50.5
31	Chicago	50.4
32	Cleveland	50.1
33	Oklahoma City	50.1
34	Seattle	50.0
35	Charlotte	49.9
36	Buffalo	49.7
37	Milwaukee	49.5
38	Salt Lake City	49.2
39	Louisville	49.1
40	San Francisco	48.9
41	Providence	48.6
42	Austin	48.5
43	Raleigh	48.3
44	Washington, D.C.	47.8
45	Columbus	47.3
46	Kansas City	46.7
47	**St. Louis**	**46.6**
48	Cincinnati	46.5
49	San Jose	45.7
50	**Pittsburgh**	**43.2**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25070)

EWG Region Analysis: Housing Affordability

Among the county-level jurisdictions in the EWG region, the city of St. Louis and Franklin County have the lowest median monthly housing costs. However, the city also has the highest proportion of cost-burdened homeowners, due to a high concentration of lower-income households, with 43.4% of households earning less than $45,000 in 2022. See Table 05-01 and Figure 05-01.

Franklin County is the most affordable, with the lowest median monthly housing cost and the third lowest rate of cost-burdened owners. From 2017 to 2022, it led the EWG counties in housing permit growth. Monroe County had the lowest rate of cost-burdened owners in the region.

St. Charles County had the highest median monthly housing cost in the region, but also had the second-lowest percentage of cost-burdened homeowners. This reflects the county's high-income levels, with 49.7% of households receiving over $100,000 in 2022.

The rate of cost-burdened renters is similar for most of the counties, around 44 to 45%. However, Jefferson, Franklin, and St. Charles counties have significantly lower rates, 39.4%, 39.8%, and 38.6%, respectively.

Table 5-01. Housing Costs and Affordability

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022

	Median Monthly Housing Costs ($)	Housing Costs as a Percent Median Household Income (%)
Madison	1,014	16.2
Monroe	1,241	19.8
St. Clair	1,065	17.0
Franklin	940	15.0
Jefferson	1,084	17.3
St. Charles	1,399	22.3
St. Louis	1,202	19.2
City of St. Louis	983	15.7
EWG Region	**1,127**	**18.0**

Note: Housing costs are a percent of the median household income for the St. Louis MSA.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25105,S1901); IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota

Figure 5-01. Cost-Burdened Households by Type
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022
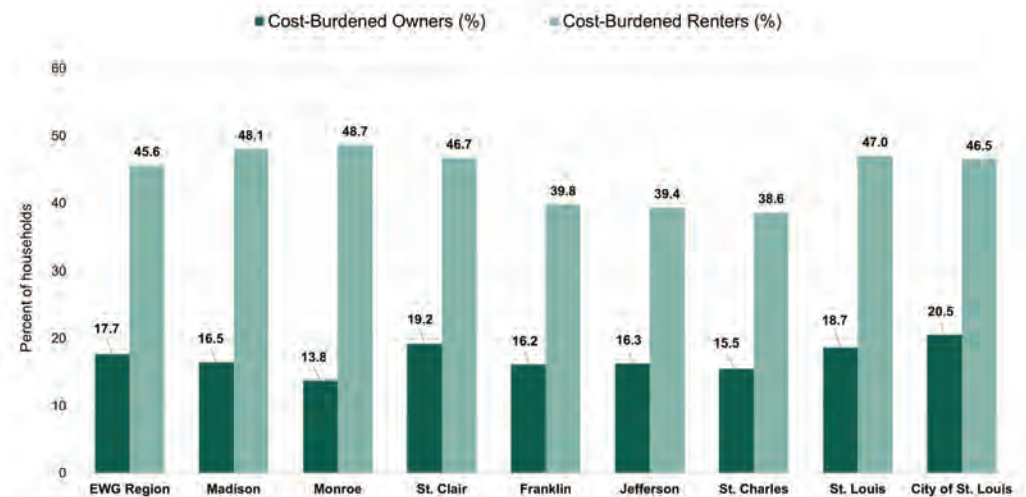
Note: Cost-burdened refers to households paying more than 30% of their household income on housing.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25091, B25070)

Vacancy

St. Louis has fewer empty residential units than it used to, but still more than most MSAs. The St. Louis region ranks 14th out of 50 peer regions in percentage of residential units that are vacant, despite the number of vacancies falling by 20,000 from 2018 to 2022. While empty units can be signs of decline, they are not necessarily a solely negative indicator for a region.

Measuring Success: Vacancy

What is being measured? Measuring vacancy rates is not as simple as finding how many homes or apartments are empty. The vacancy data comes from the Census Bureau's measurement of "vacant units," which includes homes that are temporarily unoccupied, vacation properties, or newly constructed units waiting for their first residents. It does not include housing that is uninhabitable, another important topic for which the term "vacancy" is also often used. Understanding these nuances is essential for accurately interpreting what vacancy rates reveal about the economic and social health of a region.

What makes this a good measure of success? In general, the vacancy rate can be a good indicator of the desirability of a community. A low vacancy rate for a community may indicate a tight housing market, where demand to live in the region is high relative to the supply of units. Austin is a good example of this, with high demand for housing outpacing development. Conversely, a high vacancy rate can be a symptom of economic decline and low neighborhood quality.

What is problematic about this measure? Communities with a large number of vacation homes tend to have higher vacancy rates. Vacancies can also be present in areas where rapid construction of housing is occurring, and data is collected in between construction and occupancy. Additionally, vacancy rates can decline in areas that are losing population as units become uninhabitable and/or demolished.

Vacancy rates can either be too high or too low. It is important to understand why a region has the vacancies that it does instead of drawing conclusions based solely on its ranking against peer regions. As noted earlier, the Census Bureau does not include housing that is unhabitable. These are often the most problematic vacancies for local communities.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"The majority of storefronts have businesses, the homes have occupants...and the residents have what they need to live fulfilled lives." –St. Charles County Resident

Vibrant communities and people [including]...low vacancies" –St. Louis County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Vacancy

Most peer regions have lower vacancy rates than the United States as a whole. This indicates that vacancy rates tend to be higher in rural areas, which is in part due to a relatively large proportion of seasonal homes in these areas.

Eight peer regions have higher vacancy rates than the U.S. rate. They include a mix of high growth regions and regions that are not high growth.

The 10 regions with the lowest vacancy rates also rank favorably on measures of income, poverty, and well-being.

Only three regions had increases in vacancy rates from 2012 to 2022. Two of these, **San Jose** and **San Francisco**, experienced large out-migrations during the pandemic. The third, **Raleigh**, has experienced an increase in population. In Raleigh, more than half of vacant units are rental properties, compared to a peer region average of about a quarter of units.

Vacancy Rate

Vacant units as a percent of all housing units, 2022

1	New Orleans	13.9
2	Miami	12.6
3	Tampa	12.1
4	Birmingham	10.7
5	Riverside	10.3
6	Pittsburgh	9.9
7	Las Vegas	9.8
8	Memphis	9.7
United States		**9.7**
9	Raleigh	9.3
10	Oklahoma City	8.6
11	Phoenix	8.4
12	Cleveland	8.3
13	Jacksonville	8.2
14	**St. Louis**	**8.2**
15	Orlando	8.0
16	Detroit	8.0
17	San Antonio	8.0
18	Sacramento	7.4
19	San Francisco	7.4
20	New York	7.4
21	Virginia Beach	7.4
22	Houston	7.2
23	Indianapolis	7.1
24	Atlanta	7.1
25	Providence	7.0
26	Charlotte	6.9
27	Buffalo	6.7
28	Columbus	6.6
29	Kansas City	6.6
30	Nashville	6.5
31	Hartford	6.4
32	Baltimore	6.2
33	Milwaukee	6.2
34	Chicago	6.1
35	Dallas	6.1
36	San Diego	6.0
37	Los Angeles	6.0
38	Louisville	6.0
39	Salt Lake City	5.9
40	Cincinnati	5.8
41	San Jose	5.8
42	Seattle	5.7
43	Philadelphia	5.7
44	Boston	5.6
45	Richmond	5.6
46	Denver	5.2
47	Portland	5.0
48	Washington, D.C.	5.0
49	Austin	4.6
50	**Minneapolis**	**4.5**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25002)

Change in Vacancy Rate

Percentage point change in vacant units as a percent of all housing units, 2012-2022

1	San Jose	2.2
2	Raleigh	2.1
3	San Francisco	1.3
4	Pittsburgh	-0.2
5	New Orleans	-0.5
6	Minneapolis	-0.6
7	Milwaukee	-0.8
8	Denver	-0.8
9	Hartford	-1.1
10	Boston	-1.2
11	Portland	-1.2
12	Seattle	-1.3
13	New York	-1.7
14	San Diego	-1.7
15	San Antonio	-1.9
16	Washington, D.C.	-2.0
17	Dallas	-2.2
18	Birmingham	-2.2
19	**St. Louis**	**-2.4**
20	Nashville	-2.4
21	Oklahoma City	-2.4
22	Virginia Beach	-2.5
23	Sacramento	-2.5
24	Salt Lake City	-2.7
25	Memphis	-2.7
26	Charlotte	-2.8
United States		**-2.8**
27	Philadelphia	-2.9
28	Baltimore	-3.0
29	Kansas City	-3.0
30	Buffalo	-3.1
31	Providence	-3.2
32	Columbus	-3.3
33	Louisville	-3.4
34	Chicago	-3.6
35	Cleveland	-3.7
36	Austin	-3.8
37	Indianapolis	-3.8
38	Houston	-4.0
39	Riverside	-4.2
40	Atlanta	-4.5
41	Detroit	-4.6
42	Tampa	-4.6
43	Cincinnati	-4.6
44	Richmond	-5.3
45	Miami	-5.4
46	Las Vegas	-5.9
47	Phoenix	-6.3
48	Jacksonville	-7.4
49	**Orlando**	**-10.1**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25002)

In the St. Louis MSA, the number of vacancies fell by 20,000 (16.4%) from 2018 to 2022. The largest decrease was in for-sale properties. There were also reductions in the categories of vacancies for rent, sold-not occupied, seasonal, migrant workers, and the "other" category. There was an increase only in the small category of rented, not occupied. See Table 6-01.

Table 6-01. Vacancy by Type						
St. Louis MSA and United States, 2018 and 2022						
United States	**2018**	**2022**	**Percent of Vacant Units**		**Percent Change**	**Absolute Change**
			2018	**2022**	**2018-2022**	**2018-2022**
Total Vacant Units	**17,019,726**	**13,901,967**			**-18.3**	**-3,117,759**
For rent	2,908,916	2,439,877	17.1	17.6	-16.1	-469,039
Rented, not occupied	595,023	511,341	3.5	3.7	-14.1	-83,682
For sale only	1,206,192	723,726	7.1	5.2	-40.0	-482,466
Sold, not occupied	665,895	626,440	3.9	4.5	-5.9	-39,455
Seasonal, rec, or occasional use	5,435,399	4,546,733	31.9	32.7	-16.3	-888,666
For migrant workers	39,756	27,913	0.2	0.2	-29.8	-11,843
Other vacant	6,168,545	5,025,937	36.2	36.2	-18.5	-1,142,608
St. Louis MSA	**2018**	**2022**	**Percent of Vacant Units**		**Percent Change**	**Absolute Change**
			2018	**2022**	**2018-2022**	**2018-2022**
Total Vacant Units	**124,858**	**104,346**			**-16.4**	**-20,512**
For rent	26,200	19,727	21.0	18.9	-24.7	-6,473
Rented, not occupied	2,372	3,107	1.9	3.0	31.0	735
For sale only	15,685	6,384	12.6	6.1	-59.3	-9,301
Sold, not occupied	10,129	8,556	8.1	8.2	-15.5	-1,573
Seasonal, rec, or occasional use	11,150	9,358	8.9	9.0	-16.1	-1,792
For migrant workers	192	47	0.2	0.0	-75.5	-145
Other vacant	59,130	57,167	47.4	54.8	-3.3	-1,963

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B25004)

EWG Region Analysis: Vacancy

Within the St. Louis region, vacancy is highest in parts of the urban core that have historically experienced out-migration and disinvestment. Since 2017, there has been an overall decrease in the number of vacant units and the vacancy rate for the region and in most of the county-level jurisdictions in the region. The exceptions were in Franklin and Monroe counties, the most rural in the region. The city of St. Louis and St. Louis County experienced the largest decreases in the number of vacant units. St. Charles County had the largest percentage decrease

(24.9%) from 2017 to 2022. Table 6-02 provides the residential vacancy rates for the EWG region as a whole and each of the county-level jurisdictions for 2017 and 2022.

The vacancy rate for the EWG region and most of the counties either decreased or remained about the same for 2017 and 2022. This was coupled with an increase in the total number of units in most of the counties as well. The EWG region experienced a 13.4% decrease in vacant units while increasing the total number of units by 1.3%.

The total number of housing units increased in most of the counties. There was a slight decrease in Madison County and more substantial decreases in St. Clair County and the city of St. Louis. These decreases were accompanied by decreases in vacant units as well. St. Charles County experienced the largest growth in total housing, in both absolute and percentage terms, and also had the largest decrease in the percentage of homes that are vacant.

Map 6-01 provides the vacancy rates for the region for 2022, showing the higher rates in the city of St. Louis and St. Clair County.

	Table 6-02. Vacancy Rate										
	East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2017 and 2022										
	Vacant Units		Housing Units		Vacancy Rate			Vacant Units		Housing Units	
County	2017	2022	2017	2022	2017	2022	Percentage Point Change	Absolute Change	Percent Change	Absolute Change	Percent Change
Madison	11,565	9,801	118,806	118,715	9.7	8.3	-1.5	-1,764	-15.3	-91	-0.1
Monroe	704	995	13,931	14,560	5.1	6.8	1.8	291	41.3	629	4.5
St. Clair	16,230	14,464	119,355	115,165	13.6	12.6	-1.0	-1,766	-10.9	-4,190	-3.5
Franklin	3,850	3,908	44,462	45,420	8.7	8.6	-0.1	58	1.5	958	2.2
Jefferson	6,235	6,135	89,979	92,590	6.9	6.6	-0.3	-100	-1.6	2,611	2.9
St. Charles	7,459	5,598	150,013	161,979	5.0	3.5	-1.5	-1,861	-24.9	11,966	8.0
St. Louis	37,096	31,613	439,403	444,860	8.4	7.1	-1.3	-5,483	-14.8	5,457	1.2
City of St. Louis	36,418	30,733	176,159	173,792	20.7	17.7	-3.0	-5,685	-15.6	-2,367	-1.3
EWG Region	121,574	105,269	1,154,125	1,169,103	10.5	9.0	-1.5	-16,305	-13.4	14,978	1.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022 (B25002)

Map 6-01. Vacancy Rate

Percent of Housing Units

- 31.1% - 58.0%
- 18.7% - 31.0%
- 10.3% - 18.6%
- 4.6% - 10.2%
- 0.0% - 4.5%

Other Map Data

- County Boundary
- Interstate Highway
- Main Road
- Major River
- No Data

Counties labeled on map: ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MADISON COUNTY, ST. LOUIS COUNTY, ST. LOUIS CITY, ST. CLAIR COUNTY, FRANKLIN COUNTY, JEFFERSON COUNTY, MONROE COUNTY

0   5   10 Miles
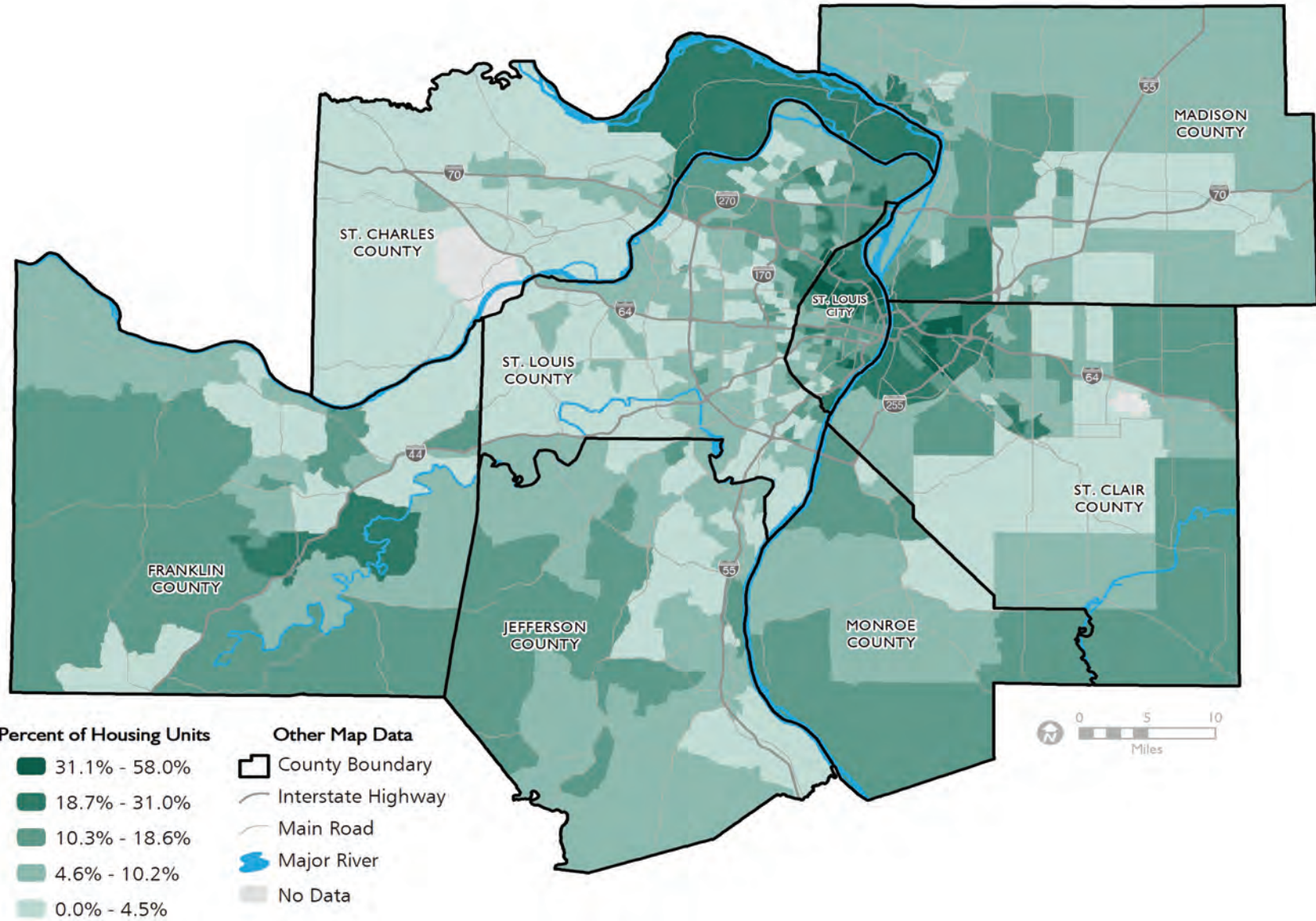
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25002), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Crime

In the St. Louis region, homicide rates are lower than the peak year of 2020 but remain higher than a decade ago. Rates for the MSA are consistently one of the highest among the peer regions. High homicide rates are strongly associated with high levels of poverty, segregation, and racial disparity. Regional business organizations have declared that reducing violent crime is essential for the region to prosper, and in 2023, the EWG Board of Directors began a regionally coordinated effort to reduce violent crime, including shootings and homicides.
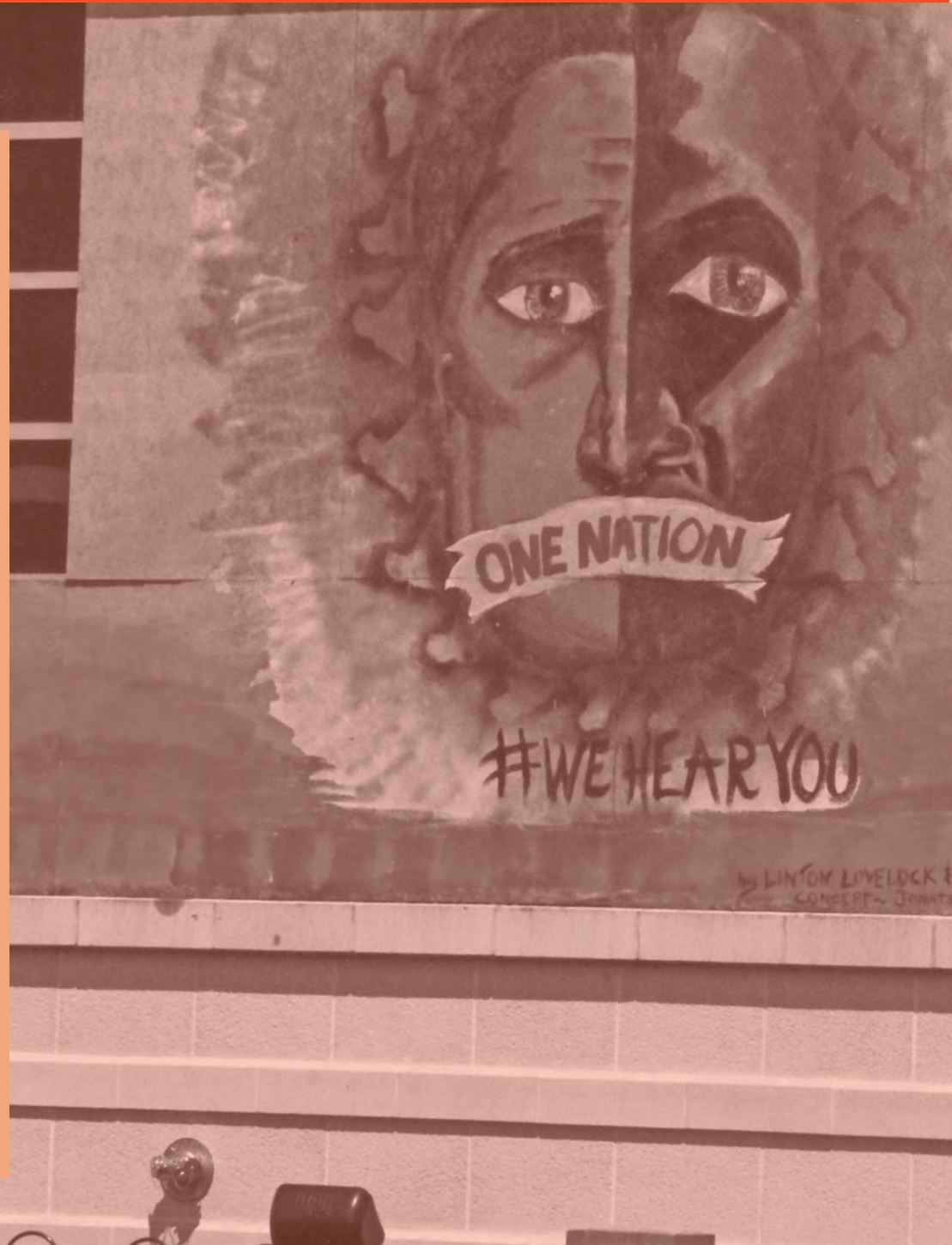
Measuring Success: Crime

What is being measured? This report primarily uses age-adjusted homicide rates compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which presents the most consistent time series in a form that is readily comparable across the peer regions. The CDC data are compiled from death certificates, reported at the county level.[7-01] Crime data from the FBI is more widely referenced by others but is not consistently available for the peer regions.

The CDC data differs from the FBI data in two important ways. First, deaths are categorized based on the place of residence of the homicide victim. This was chosen over place of occurrence data to be consistent with other CDC fatality data reported by WWS and to focus on deaths of residents of the St. Louis MSA. At the MSA level, there is not much difference between the rates for place of occurrence vs. place of residence. Second, the data reported here are age-adjusted rates. This enables both comparison over time and between the peer regions, which have differing age distributions.

Homicides and violent crime only account for a portion of crimes and public safety concerns. Therefore, motor vehicle theft crime was selected as a proxy for property crime. This data is from the FBI, by place of occurrence.

What makes these good measures of success? Public safety is an important aspect of individual and community well-being. Violent crime not only affects those who are directly involved but many more who are exposed. This trauma can increase risk for severe physical and mental health outcomes, including post-traumatic stress disorder, substance use, suicide, chronic physical health conditions, and anxiety. Exposure to violence also affects the ability of children to succeed in school.[7-02]

Property crime is another aspect of public safety that is important to residents of a region. Motor vehicle thefts are a good proxy for property crime for several reasons. They are much more likely to be reported than other property crimes,[7-03] data are readily available,[7-04] and stolen cars are found to often be used in the act of other crimes, making motor vehicle theft a "keystone crime."[7-05]

What is problematic about these measures? There are a few general challenges with crime data. The geography level used for reporting this data is particularly important. Across the country, urban cores of metro areas tend to have higher crime rates. In most regions, the central city is part of a surrounding county. In St. Louis, the city is not part of a surrounding county and constitutes its own county-level jurisdiction. As a result, reporting data at the county level exaggerates the extent to which the city differs from other large urban jurisdictions.

When considering comparable geographic levels across the country, the murder rate in St. Louis is relatively high, although usually it is not the highest.

Crime data are often reported inconsistently or incompletely, and can be skewed by an increase in reporting rather than an increase in actual crimes.

The CDC homicide rates are somewhat higher than those published by the FBI. This is due in part to more complete coverage by the CDC, but it may also be due in part to some deaths classified as a homicide on the death certificate but not classified by law enforcement in the same way or to comply with legal standards.

Finally, motor vehicle theft data are not available for all of the peer regions.

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"For me, a region is successful if citizens can find employment and can feel safe in their daily lives" –Jefferson County Resident

"Two words: low crime – especially low violent crime. Tackle this, and the rest will fall much more easily into place." –City of St. Louis Resident

7-01 CDC generally publishes this data at the county level, but when a county has fewer than 10 homicides the data are suppressed. Counts from these counties are included in MSA-level queries. This report uses data aggregated to the MSA level.
7-02 Abt, Thomas. 2019. Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence—and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets. Basic Books.
7-03 U.S. Department of Justice. Criminal Victimization, 2022 US DOJ, September 2023. https://bjs.ojp.gov/document/cv22.pdf
7-04 Rosenfeld, Richard, et, al, Did Violent Crime go up or down? Accessed at https://counciloncj.org/did-violent-crime-go-up-or-down-last-year-yes-it-did/
7-05 Lopez, Ernesto, and Bobby Boxerman. Crime Trends in U.S. Cities Year-End 2023 Update, 2023 Update, January 2024. Council on Criminal Justice. https://counciloncj.org/crime-trends-in-u-s-cities-year-end-2023-update/

Peer Region Analysis: Crime

Homicide rates in the United States have generally decreased since the 1990s but spiked in 2020. Since then, the rates have decreased but remain elevated. There are large differences in rates among the peer regions. These differences are associated with regional levels of poverty, segregation, and racial disparity.

The age-adjusted homicide rates among the peer regions in 2023 ranged from 2.3 deaths per 100,000 population in **Boston** to a rate of 34 per 100,000 in **New Orleans.** The rate for the country was 7.1. Most of the Midwest peer regions, including St. Louis, are higher than the national average. The age-adjusted rate in **St. Louis** is more than twice as high as the national rate, and **St. Louis** has the 4th highest rate among the peer regions.[7-06]

There is an association between homicide rates and levels of segregation and racial disparity as seen in recent WWS data and as reported by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in an analysis of violence in St. Louis.

In the 2018-2022 American Community Survey, there were eight peer regions that met the following criteria: the percentage of Black residents living in tracts with concentrated poverty was at least four times the percentage of white residents living in concentrated poverty;[7-07] and the difference between Black and white rates of concentrated poverty was at least 16.7 points.

Seven of these regions with extreme racial disparities in concentrated poverty were the seven regions with the highest homicide rates in 2023: **Memphis, Birmingham, St. Louis, Louisville, Cleveland, Milwaukee,** and **New Orleans**. The eighth region was **Buffalo,** which has the lowest percentage of Black residents among these eight regions.

7-06 Hartford is not included.
7-07 Concentrated poverty is defined as a 40% poverty rate at the tract level.

Homicides

Per 100,000
population, age-adjusted, 2023

1	Memphis	34.0
2	New Orleans	28.5
3	Birmingham	19.0
4	St. Louis	14.9
5	Milwaukee	13.8
6	Cleveland	13.3
7	Louisville	13.2
8	Kansas City	12.6
9	Baltimore	12.5
10	Indianapolis	11.6
11	Chicago	11.2
11	Virginia Beach	11.2
13	Jacksonville	11.1
14	Richmond	10.4
15	Philadelphia	10.1
16	Atlanta	10.0
17	Detroit	9.5
18	Houston	9.1
18	Las Vegas	9.1
18	San Antonio	9.1
21	Washington, D.C.	8.5
22	Columbus	8.4
23	Phoenix	7.5
24	Miami	7.1
24	Nashville	7.1
United States		**7.1**
26	Buffalo	7.0
26	Dallas	7.0
28	Denver	6.7
29	Charlotte	6.5
29	Oklahoma City	6.5
31	Cincinnati	6.1
31	Orlando	6.1
33	Pittsburgh	6.0
34	San Francisco	5.8
35	Los Angeles	5.6
35	Seattle	5.6
37	Tampa	5.5
38	Portland	4.8
39	Riverside	4.7
40	Sacramento	4.5
41	Minneapolis	4.2
42	Raleigh	4.1
43	Austin	4.0
44	New York	3.4
45	Salt Lake City	2.8
46	Providence	2.7
47	San Diego	2.5
47	San Jose	2.5
49	Boston	2.3

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*Data for 2023 is provisional.

Change in Homicides

Point difference in age-adjusted rate, 2019-2023

1	Memphis	12.2
2	New Orleans	7.1
3	Milwaukee	4.8
4	Louisville	4.2
5	Cleveland	3.9
6	Las Vegas	3.3
7	San Antonio	2.9
8	Virginia Beach	2.8
8	Washington, D.C.	2.8
10	Seattle	2.4
11	Columbus	2.2
12	Portland	2.0
13	Chicago	1.9
13	Indianapolis	1.9
15	Birmingham	1.8
15	Denver	1.8
17	San Francisco	1.7
18	Atlanta	1.6
18	Phoenix	1.6
20	Houston	1.5
21	Dallas	1.4
22	Kansas City	1.3
22	Philadelphia	1.3
24	Austin	1.2
24	Buffalo	1.2
24	Los Angeles	1.2
24	Minneapolis	1.2
28	Orlando	1.1
United States		**1.1**
29	Pittsburgh	0.8
29	Richmond	0.8
31	Boston	0.5
31	Raleigh	0.5
33	Tampa	0.4
34	New York	0.3
34	Providence	0.3
36	Cincinnati	0.2
36	Detroit	0.2
36	San Jose	0.2
36	St. Louis	0.2
40	Jacksonville	0.0
40	San Diego	0.0
42	Nashville	-0.1
42	Sacramento	-0.1
44	Salt Lake City	-0.4
45	Charlotte	-0.5
46	Miami	-0.6
47	Riverside	-1.4
48	Oklahoma City	-2.3
49	Baltimore	-3.7

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*Data for 2023 is provisional.

A 2017 report by the DOJ found that homicides and gun assaults are concentrated in areas of the city with high rates of poverty, unemployment, and vacancy. The agency also identified the following as key challenges in St. Louis: racial and economic segregation, low levels of trust in law enforcement, and lack of intervention services.[7-08]

The homicide rate in the St. Louis MSA has been consistently higher than the national average from 1999 to 2023 except for 2003 when the rates were about the same. Figure 7-01 shows the age-adjusted homicide rate for the St. Louis MSA, the peer region average, and the United States. Homicides rose, both nationally and in most of the peer regions, including St. Louis, following 2013. This phenomenon is sometimes called the "Ferguson Effect," although

there remain differing perspectives on whether there was a causal relationship between the events in Ferguson in 2014 and the increase in homicide rates. The rise in homicides after 2014 was much steeper in St. Louis than in the nation as a whole.

In 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic, homicide rates across the country increased again. Rates have dropped since but remain higher than a decade ago. Homicide rates increased from 2019 to 2021 in all of the peer regions except Jacksonville, which saw an increase the following year. In 2023, 39 of the peer regions and the nation had higher homicide rates than in 2019. The change for most (34) of these regions was larger than in **St. Louis.**

Motor vehicle theft rates are very strongly correlated with other crime

rate measures, particularly total crime and property crime, as reported by the FBI. However, among the peer regions, there is not a relationship between the rates of homicides and motor vehicle thefts.

Only about half of the peer regions that have the lowest homicide rates also have the lowest auto theft rates. **Baltimore** and **Richmond** are two examples. They have relatively low auto theft rates but rank 6th and 13th, respectively, on homicide rates.

Denver, Seattle, Portland, Las Vegas, San Antonio, and San Jose have relatively high auto theft rates but rank in the mid to low range on homicide rates. One possibility is that these regions encourage residents to report thefts, increasing the crimes reported.

Motor Vehicle Theft Crime Rate

Per 100,000 population, 2022

1	Denver	1,198
2	Memphis	967
3	Seattle	827
4	Portland	806
5	Milwaukee	715
6	Las Vegas	579
7	San Antonio	562
8	St. Louis	542
9	San Jose	493
10	New Orleans	469
11	Houston	418
12	Columbus	410
13	Riverside	409
14	Minneapolis	393
15	Detroit	392
16	San Diego	384
17	Salt Lake City	382
18	Dallas	373
19	Sacramento	355
20	Birmingham	311
21	Oklahoma City	304
22	Austin	303
23	Philadelphia	299
24	Indianapolis	294
25	Cleveland	284
	United States	283
26	Virginia Beach	259
27	Charlotte	239
28	Buffalo	234
29	Atlanta	233
30	Nashville	232
31	Baltimore	225
32	Hartford	210
33	Washington, D.C.	174
34	Cincinnati	172
35	Richmond	163
36	Jacksonville	151
37	Raleigh	147
38	Providence	140
39	New York	130
40	Boston	94

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports (Tables 1, 6)

Figure 7-01. Homicide Rate (age-adjusted)
Deaths per 100,000 population
St. Louis MSA, Peer Region Average, and United States, 1999 to 2023*
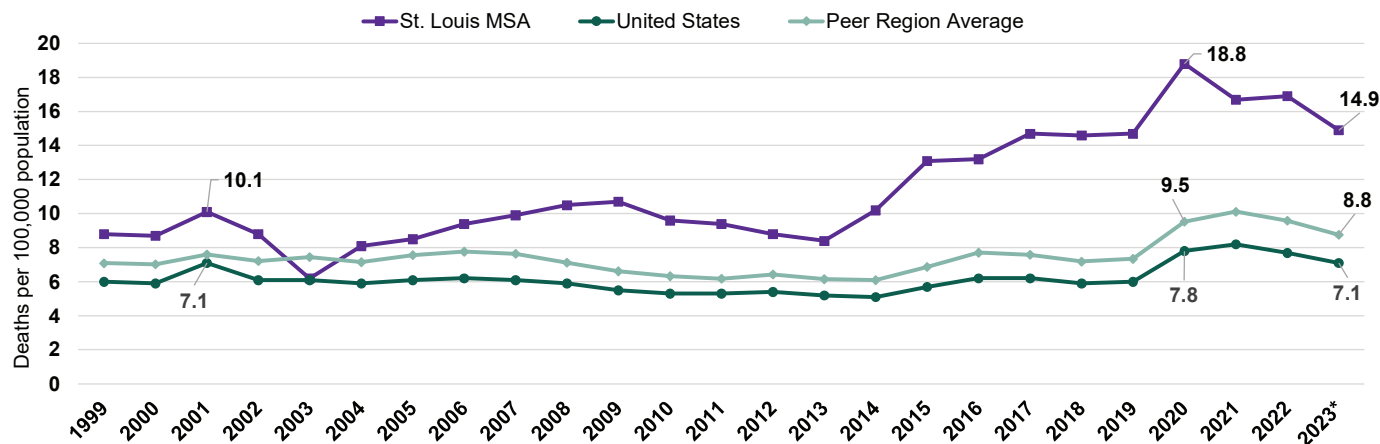
*Data for 2023 is provisional.
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wonder Database

7-08 U.S. Department of Justice Office (DOJ) of the Justice Programs Diagnostic Center, Diagnostic Analysis of the City of St. Louis, Missouri, Executive Summary, March 2017, accessed at https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/ government/departments/mayor/initiatives/public-safety/upload/Diagnostic-Analysis-for-the-City-of-St-Louis-Full-Report.pdf.

EWG Region Analysis: Crime

In the EWG region, homicide victims predominantly resided in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County. From 2018 through 2023, among the EWG region county-level jurisdictions, the largest number of homicide victims resided in St. Louis County. The highest rate was for the city of St. Louis.[7-09] See Table 7-01.

From 2018 through 2023, the number of homicides for all eight county-level jurisdictions in the EWG region was highest in 2020, when 483 residents of the EWG region were killed. In both 2019 and 2023, there were 28.8% fewer deaths than in 2020. See Table 7-02.

The National Network for Safe Communities issued a report on homicide incidents in the St. Louis region in 2023.[7-10] Key findings included:
- Homicides are strongly clustered in a few neighborhoods.[7-11]
- The risk of being involved in serious violence is clustered among a small group of victims and suspects.
- Victims and suspects tend to have significant prior contact with the criminal justice system, with an average of 6.5 previous felony cases and 13 prior arrests.

Table 7-01. Homicides

Total deaths and rate per 100,000 population

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county of residence, 2018-2023*

	Deaths	Crude Rate per 100,000
Madison	93	5.9
St. Clair	308	20.0
Franklin	27	4.3
Jefferson	59	4.3
St. Charles	70	2.9
St. Louis	1,027	17.2
City of St. Louis	881	49.8
EWG Region	2,468	15.9

*Data for 2023 are provisional

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the final Multiple Cause of Death Files.

Table 7-02. Homicides

Total deaths and rate per 100,000 population by place of residence

East-West Gateway (EWG) region, 2018-2023*

	Deaths	Crude Rate per 100,000
2018	378	14.6
2019	375	14.5
2020	483	18.7
2021	425	16.4
2022	432	16.8
2023*	375	14.5
Total	2,468	15.9

*Data for 2023 are provisional

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Provisional Mortality on CDC WONDER Online Database. Data are from the final Multiple Cause of Death Files.

7-09 Data are not available for Monroe County due to fewer than 10 deaths in this time period.
7-10 National Network for Safe Communities. 2024. St. Louis Area Problem Analysis Summary.
7-11 In this respect, St. Louis resembles other large urban areas. Within metropolitan regions, a geographic clustering of homicides in a relatively small number of hot spots has been documented in national studies for decades. See Thomas Abt, 2019. Bleeding Out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence—and a Bold New Plan for Peace in the Streets. Basic Books.

The clustering of homicides can be seen on Map 7-01, which shows homicides clustered in portions of the city of St. Louis and northern St. Louis County. This data is by place of occurrence.

"Reducing homicide and violence is essential for the health, vibrancy, and prosperity of the metro area. Regional governments, police, businesses,non-profits, and residents all have a role in reducing violence."

~ Greater St. Louis Inc. and Regional Business Council

Map 7-01. St. Louis Post-Dispatch Homicide Tracker
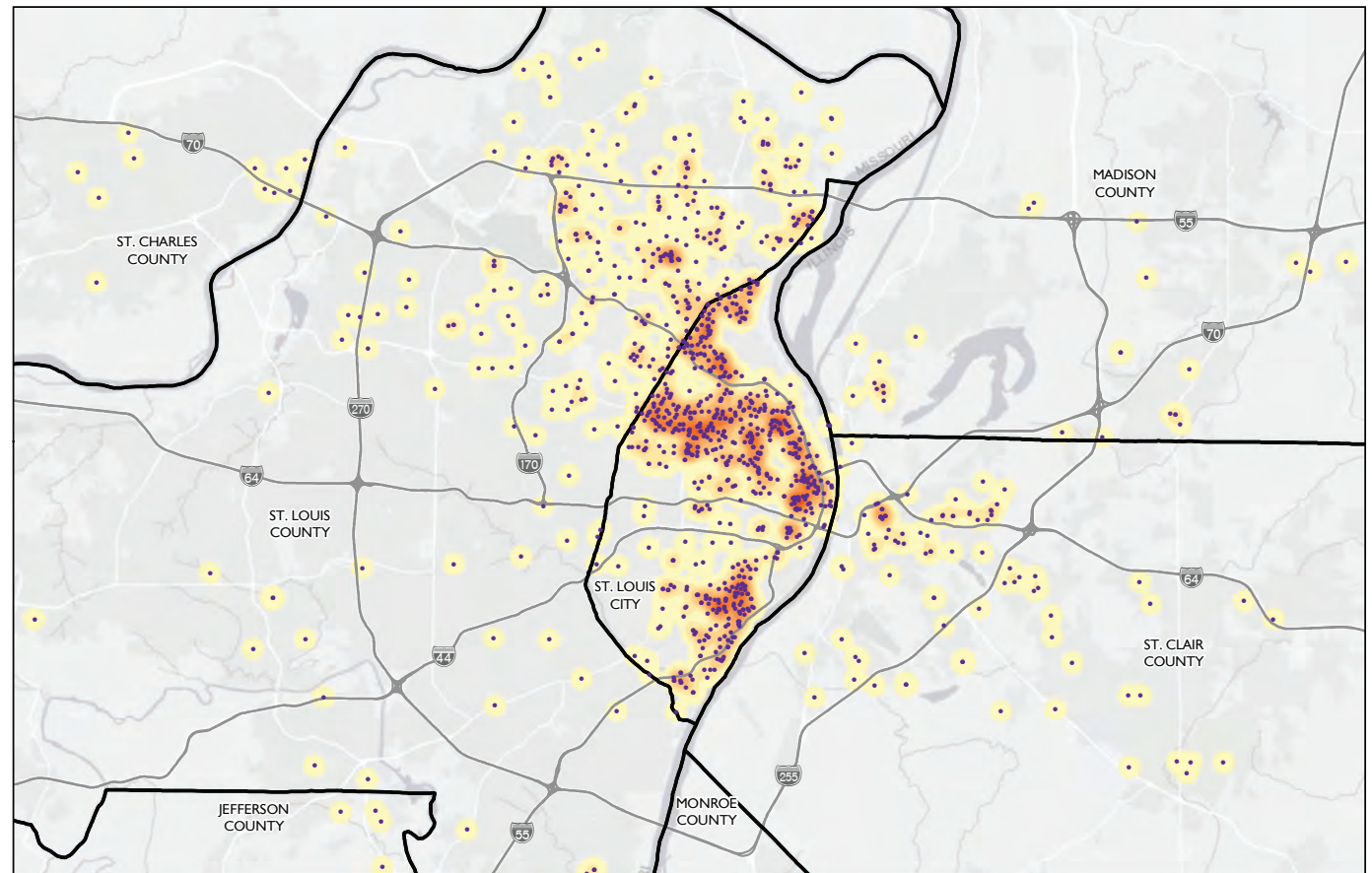
St Louis Post-Dispatch Homicide Tracker
Jan 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024

Density of Homicides Per Square Mile

1   59.02
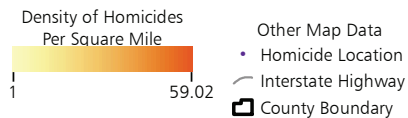
This map's crime density data was generated using ArcMap's Kernel Density tool. The analysis was conducted with a cell size of 30 meters and a search radius of half a mile to calculate the density of crime incidents in each area in square miles.

Other Map Data
- Homicide Location
- Interstate Highway
- County Boundary

0   5
Miles

Sources: St. Louis Post-Dispatch; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

EAST-WEST GATEWAY
Council of Governments

October 2024

Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rate in the St. Louis MSA is in the mid-range among the peer regions. Yet, the regional rankings on three measures of racial disparity are among the highest third of the peer regions. There are wide disparities among racial and ethnic populations across the country. In the St. Louis region, if all population groups had the same mortality rate as the Asian population, the group with the lowest rate, about 500 deaths would have been prevented from 2018 to 2022.
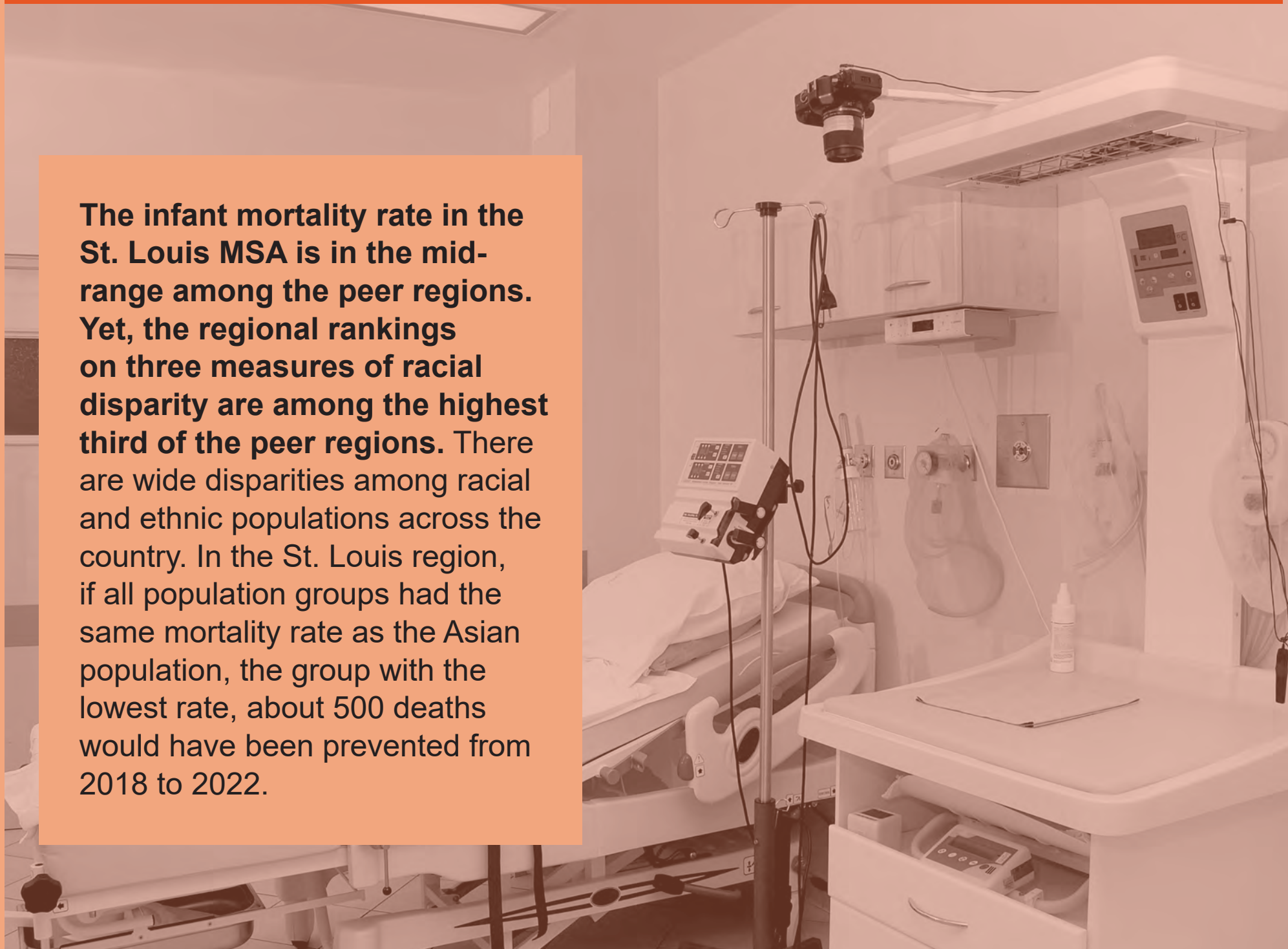
Measuring Success: Infant Mortality

What is being measured? Infant mortality rate is the number of deaths of infants less than one year old per 1,000 live births. The rates by race and ethnicity are reported per 1,000 population because the data are not available per live births. For more on the definitions and interpretations of the three disparity methods used in this section, see Page 26. The main population groups discussed here are white (not Hispanic or Latino), Black (not Hispanic or Latino), and Asian (not Hispanic or Latino) and Hispanic or Latino (referred to as "Hispanic").

What makes this a good measure of success? Infant mortality rates are an indication of the overall health of a community. Racial disparity in infant mortality is important because it is an indication of overall health disparities. In St. Louis, the For the Sake of All report provided detailed documentation of how health disparities are connected to racial segregation, preventable deaths, and associated economic costs in the region.[8-01]

What is problematic about this measure? The overall rate does not consider the outcomes of different population groups. The racial disparity metrics have their own set of challenges, which are discussed on Page 26.

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"...resources and safety for families and children…"
–City of St. Louis Resident

"A region is successful when even the least wealthy and powerful in it can have a safe, healthy environment in which they can reach their fullest potential."
–St. Charles County Resident

8-01 For the Sake of All, 31 July 2015, accessed at https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/3/1454/files/2018/06/FSOA_report_2-17zd1xm.pdf

Peer Region Analysis: Infant Mortality

The range of infant mortality rates among the peer regions is large. In 2022, the rate in **Memphis,** was nearly triple that of **San Francisco.** The rate in St. Louis is 5.9, just above the national average of 5.6.

Regions in the Northeast and Northwest tend to have relatively low rates while the Midwest regions are generally above the U.S. average. However, the rates for **Minneapolis, Chicago,** and **Kansas City** were slightly under that of the country. Most of the other regions that have the highest rates are in the South.

Infant mortality rankings for the peer regions are closely tied to other health and community well-being indicators. High infant mortality rates are associated with high rates of homicide, youth mortality, cancer, smoking prevalence, heart disease, and concentrated poverty— especially among Black communities. These regions also tend to rank lower in median household income, immigrant population, racial disparity in concentrated poverty, and the proportion of high-wage jobs.

Racial and Ethnic Disparity
For the 2018 to 2022 time period, there were 102,406 infant deaths in the United States, an average of 20,481 per year. If all population groups had the same infant mortality rate as the group with the lowest rate (Asian population), about 41.9% of these infants would not have died. That is 42,900 people. The excess method indicates that racial and ethnic disparities are present in all of the peer regions with at least 13% of infant deaths in excess of the number of deaths that would have occurred if all population groups shared the lowest regional rate.

In the **St. Louis** MSA, there were nearly 1,000 infant deaths from 2018 to 2022, an average of 191 per year. As for the country as a whole, the population group with the lowest rate in the region is the Asian population. If all groups had the same rate (2.9 deaths per 1,000 infants), about 53.5% (511) of these infants would not have died. This is the 12th highest rate of excess infant deaths among the peer regions.

Infant Mortality Rate

Deaths of infants less than one year old per 1,000 live births, 2022

1	Memphis	8.5
2	Indianapolis	8.2
3	Birmingham	7.2
4	Columbus	7.1
5	Detroit	7.0
6	Richmond	6.9
7	Milwaukee	6.8
8	Cincinnati	6.6
9	Atlanta	6.5
9	Virginia Beach	6.5
11	Cleveland	6.4
12	Jacksonville	6.3
12	New Orleans	6.3
12	Oklahoma City	6.3
15	Baltimore	6.2
16	Dallas	6.0
16	Phoenix	6.0
18	San Antonio	5.9
18	**St. Louis**	**5.9**
18	Tampa	5.9
21	Nashville	5.8
22	Philadelphia	5.7
United States		**5.6**
23	Louisville	5.5
24	Kansas City	5.4
24	Miami	5.4
24	Pittsburgh	5.4
27	Charlotte	5.3
27	Chicago	5.3
27	Houston	5.3
30	Washington, D.C.	5.2
31	Orlando	5.1
32	Buffalo	5.0
32	Salt Lake City	5.0
34	Denver	4.8
34	Las Vegas	4.8
36	Raleigh	4.7
37	Minneapolis	4.6
37	Riverside	4.6
37	Sacramento	4.6
40	Austin	4.3
41	Seattle	3.9
42	Los Angeles	3.8
43	Portland	3.7
43	San Diego	3.7
45	Providence	3.6
46	New York	3.5
47	Boston	3.1
47	San Jose	3.1
49	**San Francisco**	**2.9**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Racial & Ethnic Disparity in Infant Mortality

Percent of deaths in excess due to disparities, 2018-2022

1	Houston	68.0
2	Miami	65.3
3	Atlanta	63.2
4	New York	59.4
5	Dallas	59.4
6	Cleveland	58.8
7	Kansas City	57.0
8	Jacksonville	56.4
9	Boston	55.9
10	Chicago	54.6
11	Baltimore	53.6
12	**St. Louis**	**53.5**
13	Orlando	52.6
14	Las Vegas	51.3
15	Charlotte	50.2
16	Nashville	49.9
17	Detroit	47.7
18	Milwaukee	45.6
19	Virginia Beach	42.8
20	Memphis	42.5
21	San Antonio	42.4
United States		**41.9**
22	Richmond	41.4
23	Washington, D.C.	41.2
24	Indianapolis	40.6
25	Philadelphia	39.1
26	Birmingham	38.5
27	Raleigh	36.6
28	Tampa	35.7
29	Riverside	34.7
30	Minneapolis	34.4
31	Cincinnati	32.6
32	Pittsburgh	32.3
33	San Diego	31.5
34	Louisville	30.3
35	Columbus	30.0
36	Denver	29.7
37	New Orleans	29.7
38	Phoenix	29.6
39	Buffalo	29.1
40	Los Angeles	28.7
41	San Francisco	28.1
42	San Jose	28.0
43	Seattle	27.1
44	Providence	26.9
45	Sacramento	26.1
46	Portland	25.5
47	Oklahoma City	19.7
48	Austin	13.7
49	**Salt Lake City**	**13.0**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The excess method indicates that racial and ethnic disparities are present in all the peer regions. At least 13% of infant deaths would have been prevented if all population groups shared the lowest rate in each region. The regions with the largest percentages of excess deaths are mostly in the South, but also include regions in the Northeast and the Midwest. Some of these regions also have large disparities as measured by other methods.

Map 8-01. Racial & Ethnic Disparity in Infant Deaths, 2018-2022

Percent of deaths in excess due to disparities

13.0% — 68.0%
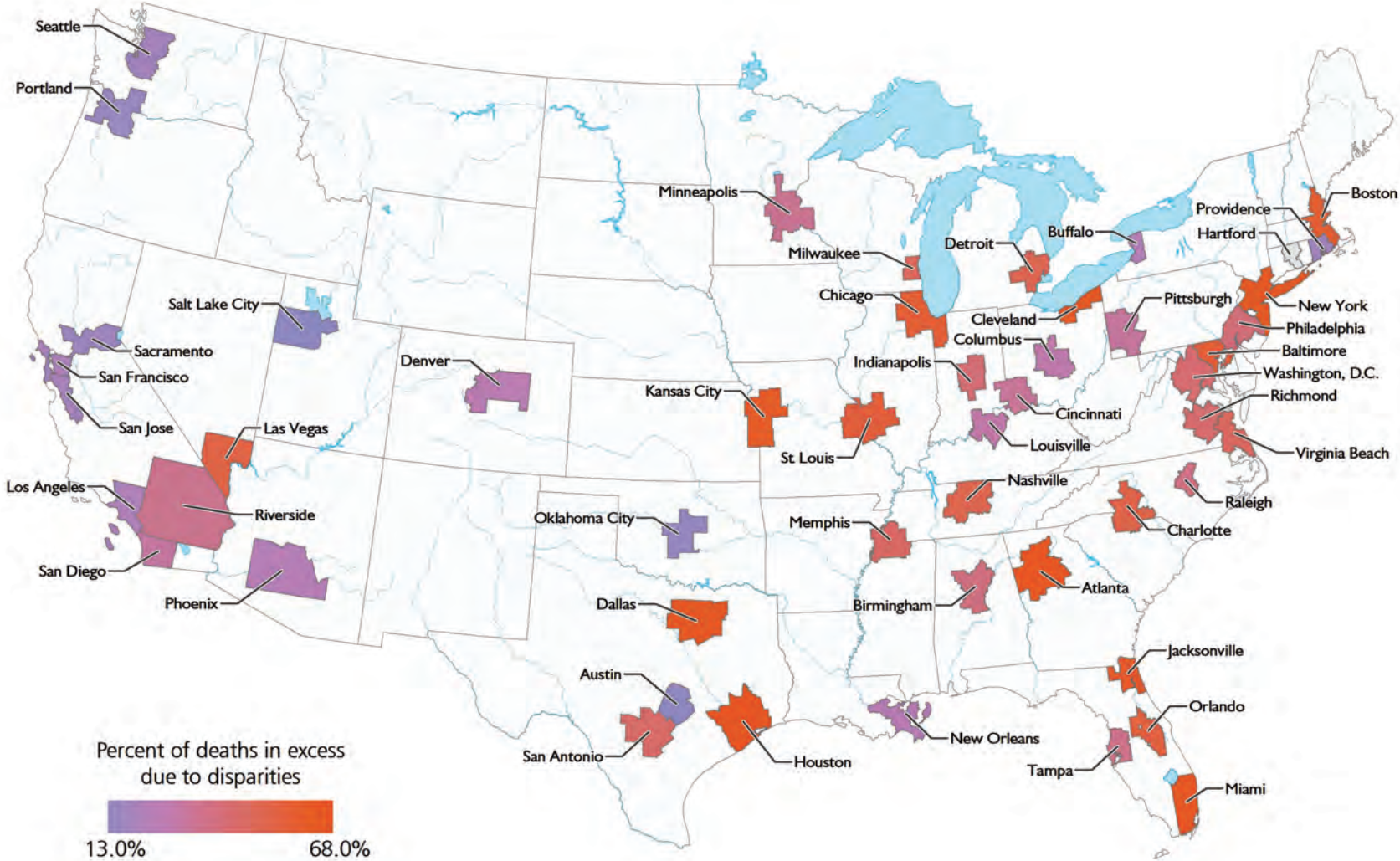
Source: Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The disparities faced by Black populations in the peer regions are higher than those faced by the Hispanic and Latino populations. In some regions, including St. Louis, the rate for the Hispanic and Latino population is lower than that of the white population. For the country as a whole, the rate is about the same for the white and Hispanic population groups, 4.6 deaths per 1,000 infants. The regions with the largest gaps between the Hispanic and white populations are a mix of regions, with several in the South **(Richmond, Virginia Beach, Jacksonville, Tampa,** and **Nashville)** and one in the Northeast **(Buffalo)**. In most of the 10 regions with the greatest disparities between whites and Hispanics, Hispanics make up less than 10% of the population. Exceptions are **Denver, Tampa,** and **Jacksonville.**

For the Black population, infant mortality rates are much larger than for the white or Hispanic populations. The lowest rate for the Black population of any of the peer regions (6.1 in San Jose) is about the same as the highest rate for any of the white population groups in the peer regions (6.2 in San Antonio). Many of the Midwest peer regions are among those with the largest disparities, particularly based on the difference method. Three southern regions – **Tampa, Jacksonville**, and **Raleigh** - are also among the top 10 for the gap between Black and white rates.

Racial Disparity in Infant Mortality

Ratio of Black to white infant deaths* per 1,000 population, 2018-2022

1	Milwaukee	4.10
2	San Diego	3.96
3	Miami	3.92
4	Minneapolis	3.83
5	Cleveland	3.60
6	San Francisco	3.45
7	Tampa	3.40
8	Philadelphia	3.38
9	Raleigh	3.37
10	Pittsburgh	3.36
11	Seattle	3.27
12	Chicago	3.26
13	Detroit	3.19
14	Washington, D.C.	3.18
15	Boston	3.16
16	Columbus	3.15
17	Denver	3.12
18	Jacksonville	3.09
19	Cincinnati	3.08
20	Phoenix	3.08
21	Portland	3.06
22	Sacramento	3.06
23	Orlando	3.05
24	Baltimore	3.03
25	St. Louis	3.00
26	Las Vegas	2.90
27	Los Angeles	2.89
28	Nashville	2.79
29	Kansas City	2.77
30	Buffalo	2.75
31	Riverside	2.70
32	Virginia Beach	2.68
33	Richmond	2.68
34	Providence	2.62
35	Charlotte	2.49
36	San Jose	2.46
United States		**2.46**
37	Memphis	2.42
38	Indianapolis	2.42
39	Oklahoma City	2.42
40	Louisville	2.41
41	Austin	2.40
42	New York	2.38
43	Houston	2.31
44	Birmingham	2.30
45	Atlanta	2.23
46	Dallas	2.21
47	San Antonio	2.02
48	New Orleans	1.84
49	Salt Lake City	1.65

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*Differs from the infant mortality rate, which is stated as per 1,000 live births.

Racial Disparity in Infant Mortality

Percentage point difference, Black (Not Hispanic or Latino) and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2018-2022

1	Milwaukee	12.4
2	Cleveland	11.2
3	Cincinnati	10.6
4	Pittsburgh	10.4
5	Columbus	10.1
6	Tampa	9.6
7	Detroit	9.4
8	Jacksonville	9.2
9	St. Louis	8.6
10	Raleigh	8.3
11	Minneapolis	8.2
11	Orlando	8.2
13	Philadelphia	8.1
13	Phoenix	8.1
15	Chicago	7.9
16	Indianapolis	7.8
17	Kansas City	7.8
18	Nashville	7.7
19	Buffalo	7.7
20	Las Vegas	7.6
21	Oklahoma City	7.5
22	Baltimore	7.3
23	Sacramento	7.2
24	Memphis	7.1
24	San Diego	7.1
26	Denver	7.0
27	Miami	7.0
27	Portland	7.0
29	Richmond	6.9
30	Birmingham	6.9
31	Seattle	6.8
United States		**6.7**
32	Louisville	6.5
33	Charlotte	6.4
33	Virginia Beach	6.4
35	Riverside	6.3
35	San Antonio	6.3
37	Washington, D.C.	6.1
38	Providence	6.0
39	Houston	5.9
40	Dallas	5.7
41	Atlanta	5.4
41	Boston	5.4
43	San Francisco	5.4
44	Los Angeles	5.1
45	Austin	4.9
46	New Orleans	4.3
47	San Jose	3.6
48	New York	3.6
49	Salt Lake City	3.0

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Ethnic Disparity in Infant Mortality

Percentage point difference, Hispanic or Latino and white (Not Hispanic or Latino), 2018-2022

1	Richmond	4.2
2	Buffalo	3.2
3	Virginia Beach	3.1
4	Jacksonville	2.8
5	Detroit	2.4
6	Denver	2.2
6	Tampa	2.2
8	Nashville	1.9
9	Baltimore	1.7
9	Minneapolis	1.7
11	Milwaukee	1.6
12	Raleigh	1.5
12	Seattle	1.5
12	Washington, D.C.	1.5
15	Philadelphia	1.4
15	Phoenix	1.4
17	Miami	1.3
17	San Diego	1.3
19	Chicago	1.2
19	Oklahoma City	1.2
19	Salt Lake City	1.2
22	Kansas City	1.2
23	Cincinnati	1.1
24	Sacramento	1.1
25	Portland	1.0
26	Providence	1.0
26	San Francisco	1.0
28	Los Angeles	0.9
29	Columbus	0.9
29	Riverside	0.9
31	Cleveland	0.8
31	San Jose	0.8
33	Boston	0.7
34	Memphis	0.6
35	Indianapolis	0.5
36	Orlando	0.4
37	Austin	0.4
37	New York	0.4
39	Dallas	0.3
39	Las Vegas	0.3
41	Pittsburgh	0.2
42	Atlanta	0.0
United States		**0.0**
43	Houston	-0.2
44	New Orleans	-0.4
45	Charlotte	-0.4
45	St. Louis	-0.4
47	Birmingham	-0.7
48	Louisville	-0.8
48	San Antonio	-0.8

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

EWG Region Analysis: Infant Mortality

In the EWG region, the infant mortality rate differs by county and by race. The rate for the counties ranges from 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in Franklin County to 9 in the city of St. Louis. Table 8-01 provides the rate for the Black and white population groups for the St. Louis 15-County MSA from 2018 through 2022. The rates for each group have varied over the time period, but the rate for the Black population has been consistently three to four times higher than the white rate. If the Black population had the same rate as the white population over this five-year period, 303 lives would have been saved.

Table 8-01. Infant Mortality				
Deaths per 1,000 population by race				
St. Louis MSA, 2018 to 2022				
2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Black (not Hispanic or Latino)				
Deaths 89	104	94	84	83
Population 7,065	6,849	6,967	6,900	7,292
Rate 12.6	15.2	13.5	12.2	11.4
White (not Hispanic or Latino)				
Deaths 117	84	68	82	74
Population 21,123	20,809	20,369	18,825	18,216
Rate 5.5	4.0	3.3	4.4	4.1

Note: Rate is per 1,000 population rather than per 1,000 live births.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Livability

What are our goals and performance measures for livability? *The follow-ing are the goals and performance measures established in East-West Gate-way's long-range transportation plan (LRP), 2030 Measuring Progress from Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL), and OneSTL's regional plan for sustainability.*

Homeownership is one of GSL's north star goals, with a target of increasing the rate to 71% through 2030 and reducing the Black-to-white gap by 30% (11 percentage points). The agency recognizes homeownership as a means for households to build wealth which can facilitate the ability to pay for education or to start a business. The agency tracks the Black-white homeownership gap, change in ownership rates, and ownership rates by other races and ethnicities.

GSL also tracks data related to vacancy and crime. GSL tracks the vacancy rate for office, industrial and retail, under its real estate section. Regarding homicides, GSL states, "Homicide is our top regional crime problem. Along with a tragic loss of life, violence impacts business and talent relocation decisions. Reducing violent crime is critical to save lives and advance inclusive economic growth."

The LRP includes residential vacancy rate and the affordability of the com-bined costs of housing and transportation (H+T) as performance measures under the guiding principle "thriving neighborhoods and communities." The agency recognizes that vacancies can have an effect on the vibrancy of a neighborhood. The H+T metric measures housing and transportation costs, two large household expenditures that are interrelated.

Like the LRP, OneSTL tracks H+T affordability and has historically tracked housing affordability, based on the percent of low-income households paying 30% or more of income on housing. OneSTL also tracks the combined violent and property crime rate.

What is St. Louis doing for livability? The following are a sampling of activi-ties, programs, plans, and studies.

The Children of Metropolitan St. Louis (CMSL) data book by **Vision for Children at Risk (VCR)** provides data to inform community action to address the well-being of children in St. Louis. The section focusing on equity uses data on poverty, income, and unemployment to show that inequities are highly concentrated in certain zip codes. Residential vacancy is one indicator provided under the category safe neighborhoods and strong communities, noting that vacant properties reduce property values and property tax revenue, strain the resources of local governments, attract crime, and degrade the quality of life in a neighborhood.

Health Equity Works, a project that was led by Washington University and Saint Louis University, addressed health, poverty, and racial inequality in St. Louis. The project published a seminal report, For the Sake of All, that laid out key recommendations for reducing economic and health disparities in the region.

RISE undertakes a variety of work to revitalize communities, including developing affordable and market-rate housing in St. Louis, providing technical assistance to community development corporations, and using data to inform decision making. RISE finds that vacant properties perpetuate crime, disinvestment, and loss of tax revenue. The agency produced a guide to understanding vacant properties in St. Louis.

The **Fair Housing Equity Assessment**, produced by the Equal Housing Opportunity Commission (EHOC), documented racially concentrated areas of poverty (RCAPs) and areas of opportunity, finding that RCAPs have higher vacancy rates, as well as disparities in infrastructure, services, and access to opportunities.

Segregation in St. Louis: Dismantling the Divide explores the history and ongoing effects of racial segregation in the St. Louis region. The report highlights how policies such as redlining, restrictive covenants, and urban renewal programs have created deep racial and economic divisions that persist today.

The **St. Louis Vacancy Collaborative** is a coalition of partners dedicated to reducing the negative impact of vacant properties in the city of St. Louis. The collaborative publishes an online vacancy explorer to help citizens track vacant parcels, and progress in reducing them.

Save Lives Now! Is a regional effort with the goal of reducing violent crime by 20% over the next three years. The effort is based on the recognition that 30% of violent crimes are committed by 0.16% of the population in the region. Three evidence-based strategies will be employed to meet the goal. They are focused deterrence, cognitive behavioral therapy, and street outreach.

The **St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission** works to reduce violent crime in the region by promoting and advocating for coordinated, well-resourced policies, support systems, and interventions among area governments, institutions, and agencies that serve individuals and families most at risk of violent crime.

Beyond Justice seeks to address the root problems of crime by working with people involved in the justice system. The organization provides alternatives to incarceration and aims to rehabilitate while allowing people to stay with their families.

ArchCity Defenders focuses on systemic inequality and engages in advocacy to reduce violence in marginalized communities. The civil rights organization addresses the connections between poverty, housing instability, and violence, pushing for policies that indirectly help reduce homicides by addressing social determinants of violence.

Washington University Institute for Public Health's Gun Violence Initiative uses a public health approach to address gun violence. Some of the key partnerships and programs are Life Outside of Violence (LOV), Stop the Bleed, and the St. Louis Suicide Prevention Coalition.

Generate Health is a nonprofit organization working to address health care access, prenatal care, and infant mortality. The agency is working to close the racial disparity gap in infant and maternal health through such programs as FLOURISH and providing data to understand the challenges, tell the story, and advocate for change.

In 2019, **Where We Stand (WWS)** documented the increase in homicides in the St. Louis and other metro regions since 2013. The report included a comparison of two data sources, county trends, and peer region comparisons. In 2017, a WWS publication documented the change in racial segregation from 1970 through 2011-2015.

What else is St. Louis doing? *Tell us what to add to the database of regional goals, performance measures, activities, plans, programs, and studies at www.ewgateway.org/wws*

OPPORTUNITY

―――

INCOME
EDUCATION

POVERTY
WELL-BEING

Income

Per capita income in the
St. Louis region is above the
national average and is higher
than most of the peer regions.
However, much of the region's
recent income growth has been
concentrated in the upper quartile
of the income distribution. The peer
regions with the highest incomes
tend to have a dominant industry
or company, many in technology
and finance. Regions with relatively
low-income inequality include some
with relatively low-income levels as
well as some high-growth regions.
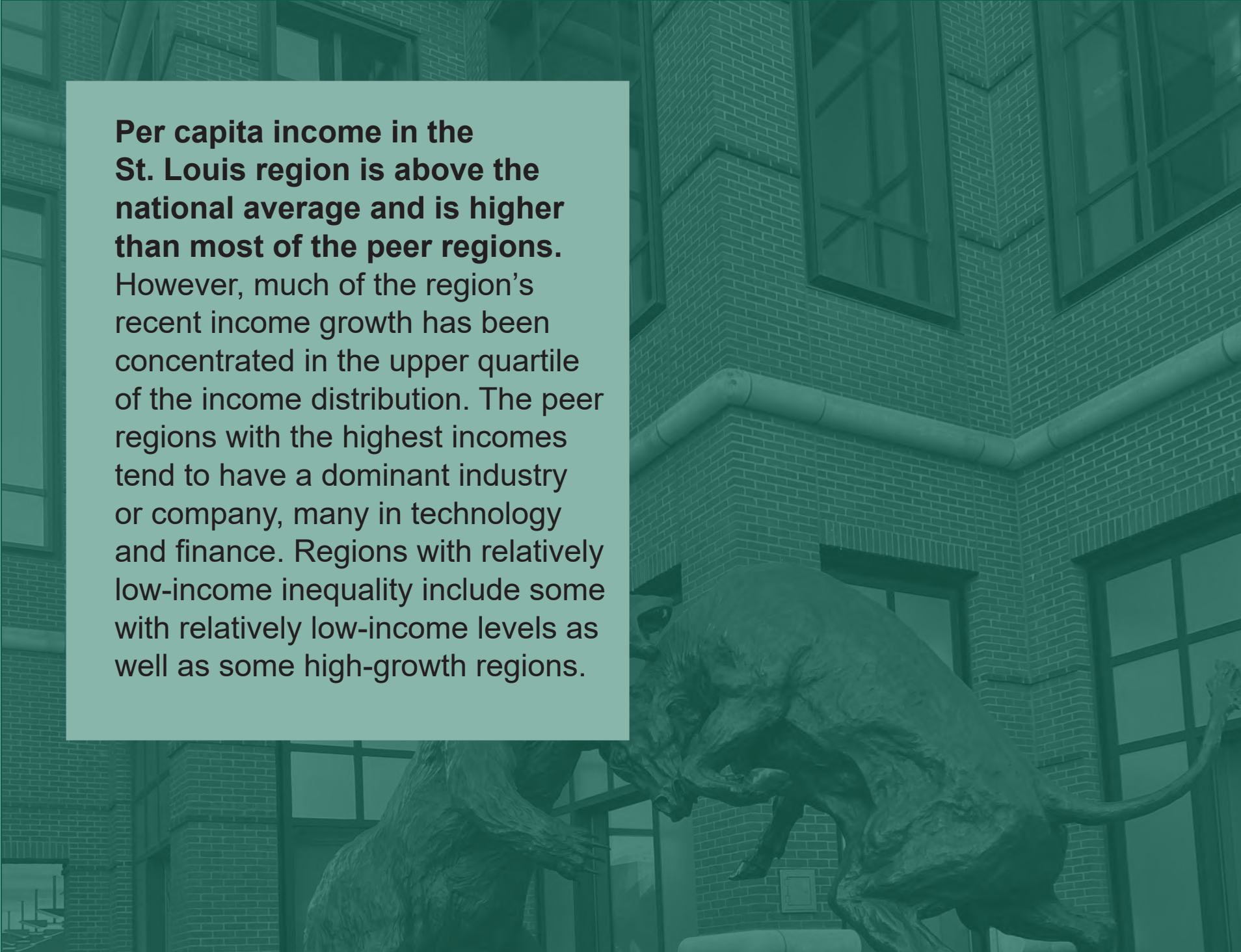
Measuring Success: Income

What is being measured? There are several ways to measure regional income levels. Here, we review six measures. Per capita income and median household income are two of the most commonly used income metrics. Average wage per job and purchasing power offer a different perspective. In addition, two measures of income inequality are provided.

Per capita income is the broadest measure of income. It includes income that is earned (proprietors' income, wage and salary, and employer contributions to social insurance), financial income (received from stock dividends and other financial assets, including interest and rent), and income received from transfers (government benefits and Social Security). As measured by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), per capita income is higher than in other estimates because it includes employer contributions to social insurance and adjustments for homeownership.[9-01]

Median household income represents what a household at the 50th percentile receives in income, with half of the population receiving more and half receiving less.

Average wage per job measures the income of wage and salary workers. This is the only one of the four income metrics that estimates income by place of work. The other three are by place of residence.

Purchasing power adjusts per capita income for cost of living.

Income Inequality: The Gini coefficient (or index) is a commonly used measure of income inequality based on household income data. Scores on the index range from zero, representing a community that has perfectly equal distribution of income across the population, to a score of one, which would be perfectly unequal with one person in the community receiving all the income.

Income Gap: Ratio of household income of those at the 80th percentile on the income distribution to those at the 20th percentile.

What makes this a good measure of success? Generally, income is intertwined with opportunity and the perception of opportunity and well-being. Insufficient income affects an individual's ability to meet basic needs. Once basic needs are met, individuals may balance other goals with income maximization.

In addition, each variable has its own qualities that make it a good measure of success.

Per capita income estimates the total amount of money flowing into households and offers a convenient measure of the overall prosperity of a region. Higher per capita income levels indicate the amount of money available in a region to support businesses, fund philanthropy and provide a tax base for local governments.

Purchasing power adjusts for cost of living in U.S. regions, providing an estimated comparison of how far one's income will go in different regions.

Median household income is not as susceptible to outliers as the other variables and is more representative of an intuitive definition of income because it does not include employer contributions and imputations for rent.

Average wage per job is an estimate of the average amount of income that people earn from employment. It does not include income that is not from employment, such as Social Security or dividends. The measures of income inequality can provide another perspective and a greater understanding of the range of how people in the community are doing.

The Gini index offers an indication of how much the income in the region is skewed to the highest income earners (based on percentiles).

The income gap measure provides a more intuitive estimate of the difference of incomes of people in the highest fifth of household incomes and the lowest fifth.

9-01 One component of BEA's estimation of per capita income is employer contributions to pension and insurance funds and social insurance funds (a component of earned income), which makes the figure higher than other estimates discussed in this document as well as other estimates of per capita income, such as those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau as part of the American Community Survey (ACS). The per capita incomes reported by BEA are substantially higher than those reported by the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. For example, for 2022, BEA reports a U.S. total population per capita income of $65,470. The U.S. Census Bureau reports an income that is 63.9% of this, $41,804. WWS uses the BEA reported data for the overall per capita income but uses the ACS data for the income by race and ethnicity.

What is problematic about this measure? Per capita income, median household income, and average wage per job do not take cost of living into account. It may be possible for a household to have a higher standard of living on a lower income by relocating from an area with a high cost of living to one with a low cost of living.

Purchasing power provides a reasonable approximation of differences in cost of living, but it is a highly modeled exercise that relies on many assumptions about typical baskets of goods consumed by households in different regions.

All four of the income measures have a few challenges in common. They do not provide the detail that is needed to understand the varying levels of income among the people that live in a community. These values can rise if the highest-income households are becoming wealthier, even if those in the middle and bottom are not enjoying higher income levels.

They also assume that higher income is always preferred and do not consider other values or circumstances that may take higher priority. A person may choose a lower income in favor of a more rewarding job, a job closer to home, or one that allows for a better life-work balance.[9-02] Further, people have different expenses from each other and at different points in their lives. For example, a minimum wage job may be fine for a teenager but may not be sufficient for a person who needs to pay rent, buy groceries, pay for childcare, and pay for car insurance.

The average or median can change due to factors that do not indicate success, such as a reduction in the number of low-wage jobs or out-migration of lower-income families.

In addition, per capita income, average wage per job, and purchasing power can be influenced by a small number of outlier cases. A small proportion of the population that earns high incomes can result in an average that does not reflect the lived experience of most of the population.

The Gini index does not have an intuitive meaning while the income gap is limited by the range of incomes. The income gap measure looks only at two points on the income distributions and ignores disparities between the general population and more elite percentiles, such as the top 10% or top 1%. These disparities have been shown to account for rising levels of inequality in the United States in recent years.[9-03]

Further, a community can score favorably on metrics of income inequality if they have a relatively equal distribution of incomes that are all low. This can also be true if all incomes are high, which can indicate a lack of diversity.

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"Successful regions have good economic development, attracting a large number of investments and enterprises, creating employment opportunities, and people have a high standard of living." –St. Louis County Resident (original survey submission in Chinese)

"Increase in high quality and high paying jobs." –City of St. Louis Resident

9-02 Puentes, R., & Warren, D. (2006). One-fifth of America: A comprehensive guide to America's first suburbs. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/200509.pdf
9-03 Alvaredo, F., Atkinson, A. B., Piketty, T., & Saez, E. (2013). The top 1 percent in international and historical perspective. Journal of Economic Perspectives, 27(3), 3-20.

Peer Region Analysis: Income

Northern coastal regions on both the Atlantic and Pacific consistently rank at the top of all four-income metrics. Two MSAs in the middle of the country, **Austin** and **Denver,** also rank in the upper tier on these metrics.

Regions that have relatively high incomes tend to have a driving industry or dominant company; they are often technology and finance hubs:

- The **San Jose** MSA is virtually synonymous with Silicon Valley and has the densest concentration of technology jobs in the nation.
- **Seattle,** home to both Amazon and Microsoft, is a technology leader.
- **Washington, D.C**. benefits from its status as the nation's capital and has a disproportionate number of high-paying federal jobs and jobs supported directly or indirectly by federal contractors.
- **New York** has long been the nation's leading region in financial services.
- **Boston** and **San Francisco** enjoy a competitive edge in both technology and finance.
- **Austin** has become a leading technology hub in recent years. Twenty percent of its wages are derived from computer systems design, information, or computer manufacturing.
- **Denver** does not have a dominant industry, but 30% of its wages come from employment in professional and business services.

Median Household Income

In dollars, 2022

1	San Jose	148,900
2	San Francisco	128,151
3	Washington, D.C.	117,432
4	Seattle	106,909
5	Boston	104,299
6	Denver	98,975
7	San Diego	98,928
8	Austin	94,604
9	Raleigh	92,739
10	Salt Lake City	91,891
11	New York	91,562
12	Minneapolis	91,341
13	Baltimore	90,505
14	Portland	89,312
15	Sacramento	89,237
16	Los Angeles	87,743
17	Hartford	85,723
18	Atlanta	84,876
19	Philadelphia	84,123
20	Chicago	82,914
21	Phoenix	82,884
22	Dallas	82,823
23	Riverside	82,803
24	Providence	81,784
25	Richmond	81,388
26	Nashville	80,034
27	Jacksonville	77,583
28	Charlotte	77,154
29	Indianapolis	75,824
30	Columbus	75,777
31	Kansas City	75,280
32	Cincinnati	75,062
33	Houston	74,863
United States		**74,755**
34	Virginia Beach	74,556
35	**St. Louis**	**74,531**
36	Orlando	71,857
37	Detroit	71,265
38	Milwaukee	70,898
39	Las Vegas	70,797
40	Miami	70,769
41	Pittsburgh	70,607
42	San Antonio	70,538
43	Louisville	69,547
44	Tampa	69,290
45	Buffalo	68,698
46	Birmingham	67,242
47	Oklahoma City	66,301
48	Cleveland	65,198
49	Memphis	64,008
50	New Orleans	61,602

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B19013)

Average Wage per Job

In dollars, 2022

1	San Jose	168,183
2	San Francisco	126,019
3	Seattle	100,479
4	Boston	96,341
5	New York	95,390
6	Washington, D.C.	93,880
7	Denver	83,367
8	Austin	83,175
9	Los Angeles	79,609
10	Chicago	78,869
11	San Diego	78,272
12	Houston	76,685
13	Hartford	76,563
14	Dallas	76,110
15	Baltimore	75,980
16	Atlanta	75,864
17	Portland	75,704
18	Philadelphia	75,493
19	Minneapolis	75,099
20	Charlotte	74,188
21	Sacramento	73,857
22	Raleigh	73,162
23	Miami	73,039
24	Detroit	70,859
United States		**70,282**
25	Salt Lake City	70,080
26	Nashville	70,060
27	Phoenix	69,535
28	Pittsburgh	68,715
29	Richmond	68,144
30	Tampa	67,316
31	Cincinnati	67,183
32	Columbus	67,156
33	Cleveland	67,104
34	Jacksonville	67,032
35	Kansas City	66,913
36	**St. Louis**	**66,560**
37	Milwaukee	66,016
38	Indianapolis	65,994
39	Birmingham	64,472
40	Providence	63,865
41	Orlando	63,590
42	Memphis	63,339
43	New Orleans	63,290
44	Las Vegas	62,278
45	Louisville	61,935
46	San Antonio	61,370
47	Virginia Beach	61,311
48	Buffalo	60,955
49	Riverside	58,610
50	Oklahoma City	58,532

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (CAINC4)

Regions with relatively high incomes tend to have the following positive attributes: larger proportions of adults with a bachelor's degree as well as with advanced degrees, lower poverty rates, a larger proportion of high-wage jobs, and lower rates of heart disease. However, higher income regions are more likely to have relatively large disparities in income per capita between race and ethnic groups. Regional rankings on income are also associated with relatively higher levels of employment in the STEM field and in retail.

The **St. Louis** region has relatively high average income levels, particularly when cost of living is considered. However, the region has below average median incomes and a below average wage per job. This suggests that much of the region's prosperity is concentrated in the upper quartile of the income distribution, and that creating a broader base of prosperity remains a challenge for the region.

From 2019 to 2022, **St. Louis** ranked 6th on growth in per capita income. Most of the growth was attributable to financial income rather than earned income. Financial income is from stock dividends, interest and rent. For more discussion on this topic, see the working paper on income at ewgateway.org/wws

Per Capita Income

In dollars, 2022

1	San Jose	141,516
2	San Francisco	123,736
3	Boston	94,082
4	Seattle	92,113
5	Denver	84,788
6	New York	84,084
7	Washington, D.C.	83,010
8	Miami	77,732
9	Los Angeles	76,445
10	Minneapolis	75,164
11	Austin	75,119
12	San Diego	74,326
13	Nashville	74,035
14	Philadelphia	73,291
15	Chicago	72,512
16	Baltimore	71,420
17	Raleigh	70,628
18	Dallas	70,493
19	Hartford	69,787
20	**St. Louis**	**69,698**
21	Portland	69,435
22	Indianapolis	68,719
23	Houston	68,344
24	Richmond	68,205
25	Milwaukee	68,155
26	Sacramento	66,940
27	Pittsburgh	65,792
United States		**65,470**
28	Cincinnati	65,253
29	Charlotte	65,156
30	Salt Lake City	65,085
31	Atlanta	64,107
32	Providence	63,746
33	Kansas City	63,417
34	Cleveland	62,921
35	Jacksonville	62,729
36	Birmingham	62,262
37	Phoenix	61,840
38	New Orleans	61,801
39	Louisville	61,490
40	Detroit	61,322
41	Columbus	61,228
42	Oklahoma City	60,687
43	Tampa	60,091
44	Las Vegas	59,150
45	Virginia Beach	57,873
46	Memphis	56,440
47	Buffalo	56,414
48	San Antonio	55,180
49	Orlando	53,959
50	**Riverside**	**50,407**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (CAINC4)

Purchasing Power

Personal income per capita adjusted for regional price levels in constant dollars, 2022

1	San Jose	106,066
2	San Francisco	90,665
3	Boston	72,595
4	Seattle	70,000
5	Denver	68,202
6	Nashville	66,221
7	Austin	65,662
8	Washington, D.C.	64,419
9	New York	64,252
10	Indianapolis	63,349
11	Minneapolis	63,072
12	Philadelphia	62,880
13	**St. Louis**	**62,283**
14	Milwaukee	62,023
15	Raleigh	62,018
16	Pittsburgh	60,556
17	Richmond	60,312
18	Cincinnati	60,302
19	Baltimore	60,234
20	Miami	60,217
21	Houston	59,779
22	Kansas City	59,450
23	Chicago	59,237
24	Birmingham	59,002
25	Dallas	58,823
26	Salt Lake City	58,765
27	Cleveland	58,400
28	Los Angeles	58,384
29	Charlotte	58,093
30	Louisville	57,543
31	Hartford	57,443
32	Oklahoma City	57,388
33	New Orleans	57,016
United States		**56,419**
34	Columbus	56,260
35	Atlanta	56,079
36	San Diego	56,070
37	Portland	55,152
38	Detroit	55,104
39	Jacksonville	55,028
40	Memphis	53,086
41	Providence	52,990
42	Las Vegas	52,935
43	Sacramento	52,627
44	Tampa	52,065
45	Buffalo	51,909
46	Phoenix	51,523
47	Virginia Beach	51,034
48	San Antonio	50,120
49	Orlando	46,424
50	**Riverside**	**40,914**

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (MARPI)

The income gap examines only two points on the income distribution, while the Gini coefficient considers the entire income distribution, including the highest-income percentiles. This results in large differences in the rankings with almost one-third (14) of the peer regions differing by 10 or more rankings on the two methods.

Generally, favorable scores on these measures of inequality are associated with population and employment growth, in-migration, housing starts, and developed land per capita. These regions also tend to have less racial segregation and younger populations. While there is a tendency for these regions to have relatively low-income levels (e.g. **Riverside** and **Virginia Beach**), some regions, such as **Salt Lake City, Raleigh,** and **Nashville**, are regions with high employment growth.

Regions with the highest levels of inequality, based on the Gini Index, can be grouped into three broad categories:
- Sunbelt regions, including **Orlando, Houston, Birmingham, Tampa, New Orleans, and Miami.**
- Coastal regions with a disproportionate number of very high-income households and usually relatively unaffordable housing, including **San Jose, San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles,** and **Philadelphia.**
- Midwestern industrial regions that have struggled with low or negative population growth, such as **Cleveland** and **Chicago.**

St. Louis is about in the middle on both measures of income inequality and less unequal than the nation. However, from 2019 to 2022, the top quartile of the region's income distribution increased its share of regional income, while all other quartiles saw decreasing shares.

Income Inequality

Gini coefficient, 2022

1	New York	0.518
2	Miami	0.515
3	Los Angeles	0.500
4	San Francisco	0.500
5	Boston	0.494
6	New Orleans	0.493
7	Birmingham	0.489
8	Tampa	0.489
9	San Jose	0.487
10	Cleveland	0.486
United States		**0.486**
11	Chicago	0.483
12	Philadelphia	0.483
13	Orlando	0.482
14	Houston	0.482
15	Memphis	0.480
16	Milwaukee	0.478
17	Detroit	0.477
18	Charlotte	0.477
19	Louisville	0.476
20	Seattle	0.474
21	Oklahoma City	0.474
22	Buffalo	0.473
23	Pittsburgh	0.473
24	Hartford	0.472
25	Cincinnati	0.472
26	Las Vegas	0.471
27	St. Louis	0.470
28	Dallas	0.470
29	Indianapolis	0.469
30	Columbus	0.467
31	Baltimore	0.465
32	Kansas City	0.464
33	Providence	0.464
34	Richmond	0.463
35	Austin	0.461
36	Atlanta	0.460
37	Sacramento	0.460
38	San Diego	0.459
39	Portland	0.458
40	San Antonio	0.456
41	Nashville	0.456
42	Phoenix	0.455
43	Jacksonville	0.453
44	Minneapolis	0.452
45	Denver	0.450
46	Virginia Beach	0.449
47	Washington, D.C.	0.448
48	Raleigh	0.445
49	Riverside	0.437
50	Salt Lake City	0.426

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,
American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates (B19083)

Income Gap

Ratio of income of those at the 80th percentile on the income distribution to those at the 20th percentile, 2022

1	New York	6.11
2	New Orleans	5.58
3	Los Angeles	5.46
4	Boston	5.40
5	Philadelphia	5.33
6	San Francisco	5.31
7	Miami	5.29
8	Birmingham	5.20
9	Cleveland	5.12
10	Buffalo	5.12
11	Baltimore	5.09
12	Providence	5.05
13	Detroit	5.04
14	Memphis	4.95
15	Hartford	4.93
16	Houston	4.92
17	Chicago	4.92
United States		**4.92**
18	Pittsburgh	4.88
19	Milwaukee	4.84
20	Tampa	4.78
21	Oklahoma City	4.77
22	Cincinnati	4.72
23	San Diego	4.67
24	Seattle	4.66
25	St. Louis	4.63
26	Sacramento	4.62
27	Richmond	4.56
28	San Antonio	4.56
29	Indianapolis	4.52
30	Dallas	4.50
31	Columbus	4.49
32	Charlotte	4.43
33	Louisville	4.43
34	Riverside	4.42
35	Kansas City	4.41
36	Orlando	4.40
37	Las Vegas	4.38
38	Portland	4.36
39	Virginia Beach	4.36
40	Washington, D.C.	4.35
41	Denver	4.32
42	Atlanta	4.29
43	San Jose	4.29
44	Raleigh	4.26
45	Austin	4.25
46	Jacksonville	4.23
47	Minneapolis	4.22
48	Phoenix	4.08
49	Nashville	4.07
50	Salt Lake City	3.81

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,
American Community Survey
1-Year Estimates (B19080)

Case Study

A closer look at income in Nashville reveals some of the challenges with using just one of these variables as a measure of performance. The region has higher average earnings per job than the nation but lower average wages per job. The difference is due to proprietors' income, largely accounted for by high-earning owners of health care businesses and, to a lesser extent, owners of arts entertainment, sports, and related businesses.

For this discussion, it is important to understand how BEA accounts for multiple types of income. Total income includes income that is earned, financial income, and income from social transfers. Earned income, or earnings, can be divided into two broad categories: compensation of wage and salary employees and proprietors' income.

Compensation of wage and salary employees is further divided into two components: wages and salaries and supplements to wages and salaries (employer contributions to health care and retirement). Proprietors' income refers to income of business owners. Table 9-01 breaks down averages for components of earnings, for the United States and Nashville. (Note, the WWS table for "average wage per job" is the wage and salary income, not including the supplements.)

Nashville's average earnings stands at $80,172, 12% higher than the U.S. average of $71,586. However, the average wage and salary in Nashville is slightly below the national average. Therefore, Nashville's advantage in average earnings is attributable to proprietors' income. The average business owner in Nashville received $73,401 in proprietors' income in 2022, more than double the U.S. average of $32,899.

The health care and social assistance industry accounts for 40% of the difference between higher proprietors' earnings in the region in the United States. Another 30% of the difference can be attributed to the arts, entertainment, and recreation industry. Almost all of the higher earnings in the latter industry are from performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries.

Nashville's prominent position in country music is well known, so it is not surprising that this industry accounts for a large proportion of proprietors' earnings. Nashville's dominance in health care is not as well known, but in terms of income is even more significant. In 1968, a team of Nashville physicians formed a company called HCA Healthcare, which began aggressively buying hospitals across the nation. In 1996, the firm was reported to own 340 hospitals, 135 outpatient surgery offices, and 200 home health care agencies in 38 states. This dynamic corporation pursued mergers, acquisitions, and spinoffs, helping to make Nashville a national leader in the for-profit hospital business, and health care more generally. In 2012, seven of the 15 largest hospital holding companies were located in Nashville. In 2017, Nashville was home to four privately held companies in the health care field worth more than $1 billion. These large privately held companies contributed to the growth of proprietors' income, which contributed greatly to Nashville's overall growth in earnings.

Table 9-01. Decomposition of Average Earnings per Job		
United States and Nashville, 2022		
	U.S.	Nashville
Average Earnings per Job (in dollars)	**71,586**	**80,172**
>> Average Wage and Salary Compensation (wages and supplements, in dollars)	**84,912**	**82,762**
>>> Average Wage and Salary	70,282	70,060
>>>> Average Supplements to Wages and Salaries	14,630	12,702
>> Average Proprietors' Income (in dollars)	**32,899**	**73,401**
Total Employment	**212,442,000**	**1,554,201**
>> Wage and Salary Employment	158,015,000	1,124,078
>> Proprietors' Employment	54,427,000	430,123

Note: The WWS table "average wage per job" is the wage and salary income not including the supplements.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

EWG Region Analysis: Income

Among the counties in the East-West Gateway (EWG) region there are large differences on the three variables for which there is local data. See Table 9-02.

- St. Louis County has the highest per capita income, as measured by BEA, which includes more types of income than then other metrics.
- Monroe County and St. Charles County are in a virtual tie for the highest median household income (MHI) in the region. However, Monroe County has the lowest average wages per job by place of employment.
- Jobs in St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis offer the highest average wages in the region. However, the city has the lowest MHI.
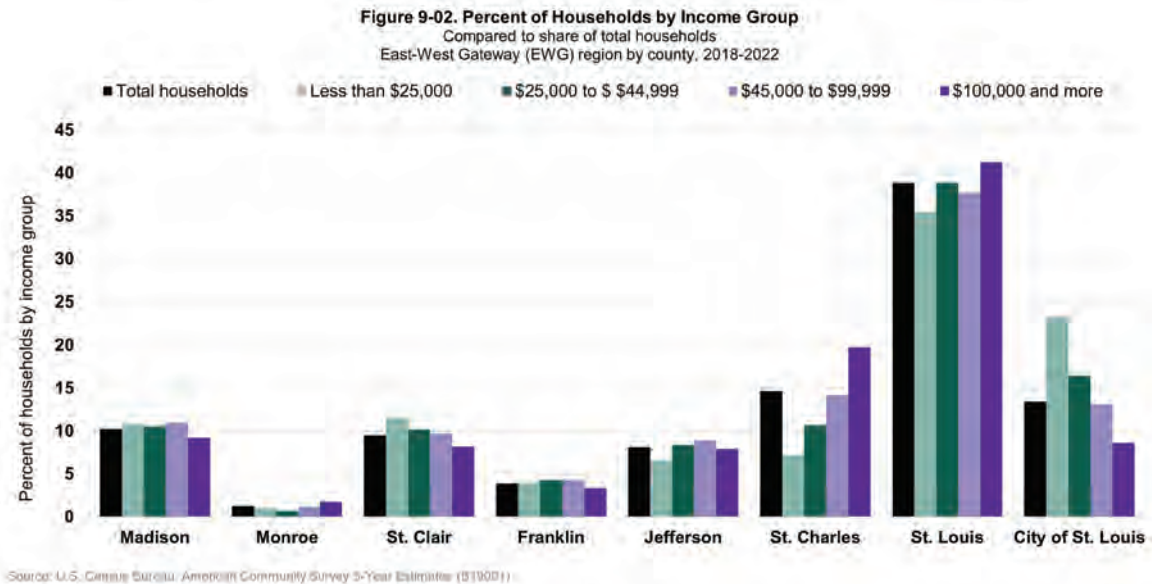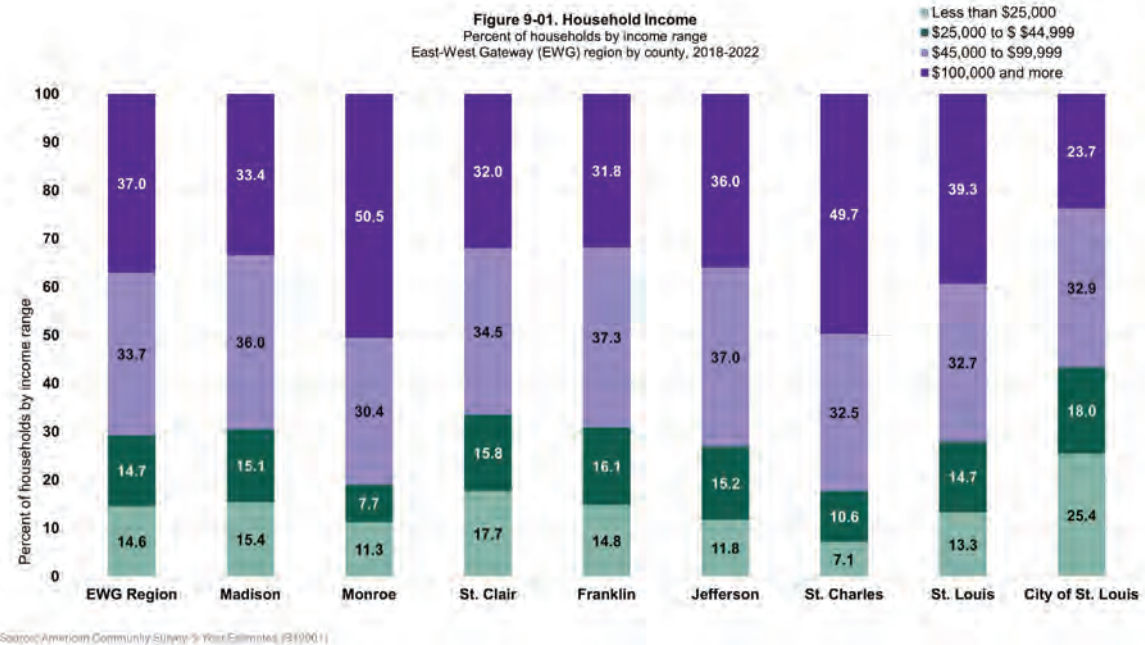
Table 9-02. Income Metrics			
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2022			
County	Per Capita Personal Income ($)	Average Wages per Job ($)	Median Household Income ($)
Madison	55,991	55,231	71,759
Monroe	68,762	45,764	100,685
St. Clair	54,666	58,065	68,915
Franklin	53,957	50,509	70,111
Jefferson	51,143	48,311	77,217
St. Charles	64,563	58,089	99,596
St. Louis	93,405	73,888	78,067
City of St. Louis	55,771	73,073	52,941
EWG Region	62,282	57,866	77,411

Sources: Per Capita Personal Income: Bureau of Economic Analysis (CAINC30); Average Earnings per Job: Bureau of Economic Analysis (CAINC30); Median Household Income: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2018-2022 (B19001)
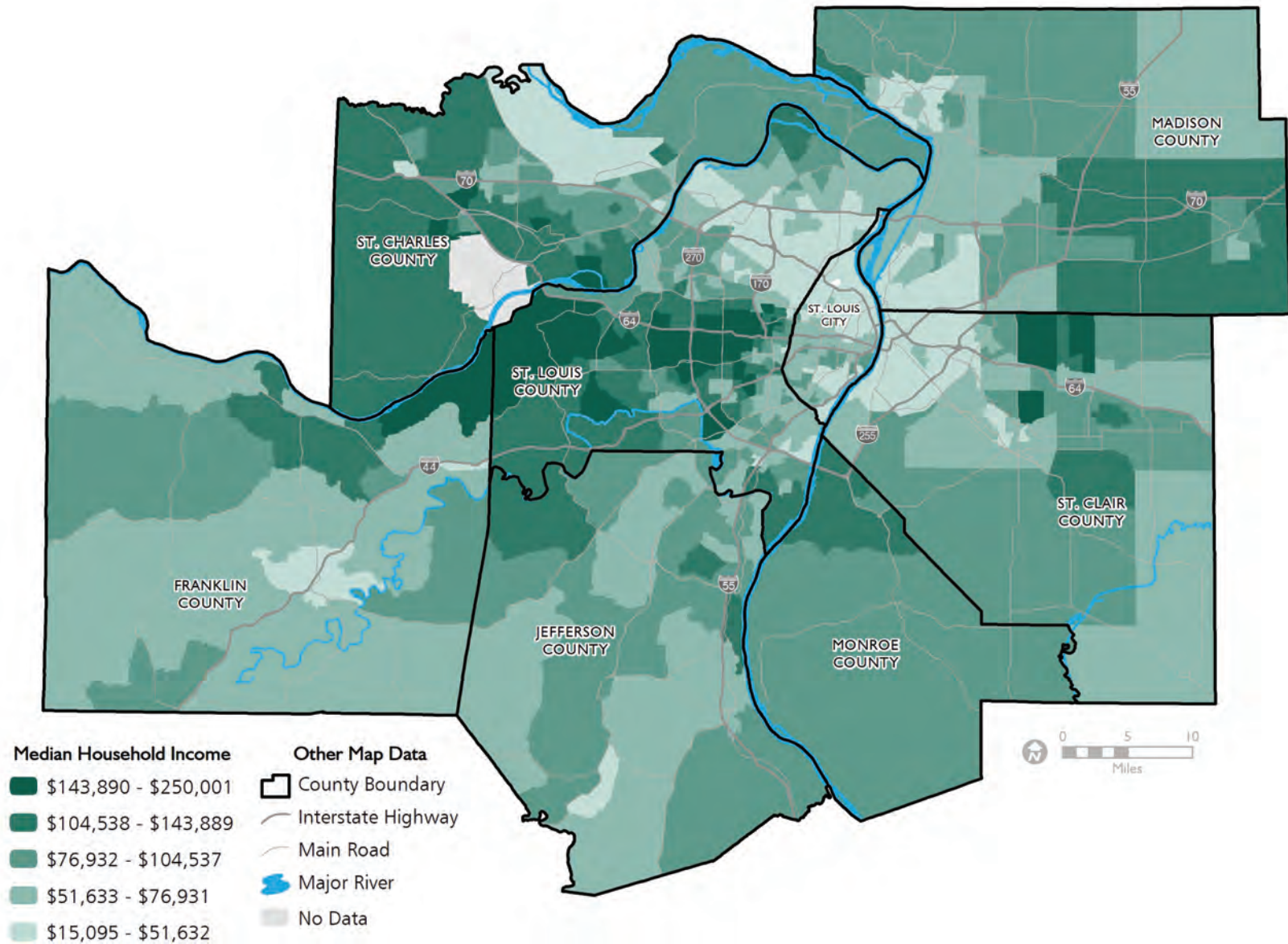
There is income diversity in every county. In each county, at least 7% of the population receives under $25,000 per year in income, and at least 23% receives over $100,000.

- In St. Charles and Monroe counties, about half of the households receive over $100,000 per year. These counties also have the lowest proportion of households receiving under $25,000 per year.
- The city of St. Louis has the largest share of households in under $25,000 category, and the smallest share in the over $100,000 category. See Figure 9-01.
- The distribution of households at each income range is similar to the distribution of total households across the counties. There are two exceptions. The city of St. Louis has relatively high proportions of those in the lowest income groups and a low share of those in the highest group. St. Charles County has a higher share of residents in the highest income group compared to total households and a relatively low share of low-income households. See Figure 9-02
- The map shows the distribution of income within the counties, at the tract level. The lowest median incomes are present in the northern parts of the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County, the western portion of St. Clair County and small spots in Franklin and Jefferson counties. The highest incomes are along the central corridor of St. Louis County and into St. Charles County. See Map 9-01.

Figure 9-01. Household Income
Percent of households by income range
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022

Legend: ■ Less than $25,000 ■ $25,000 to $ $44,999 ■ $45,000 to $99,999 ■ $100,000 and more

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B19001)

Figure 9-02. Percent of Households by Income Group
Compared to share of total households
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022

Legend: ■ Total households ■ Less than $25,000 ■ $25,000 to $ $44,999 ■ $45,000 to $99,999 ■ $100,000 and more

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B19001)

Map 9-01. Median Household Income, 2018-2022

Median Household Income

- ■ $143,890 - $250,001
- ■ $104,538 - $143,889
- ■ $76,932 - $104,537
- ■ $51,633 - $76,931
- ■ $15,095 - $51,632

Other Map Data

- ☐ County Boundary
- ╱ Interstate Highway
- ╱ Main Road
- ≈ Major River
- ▨ No Data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B19013), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Education

The St. Louis region has the 5th highest percentage of adults with a high school diploma or equivalent. Even so, it ranks among the middle of the peer regions when it comes to college attainment. While having a high rate of residents with a bachelor's degree is correlated with other favorable outcomes, a college degree should not be assumed to be necessary for individual or regional success.
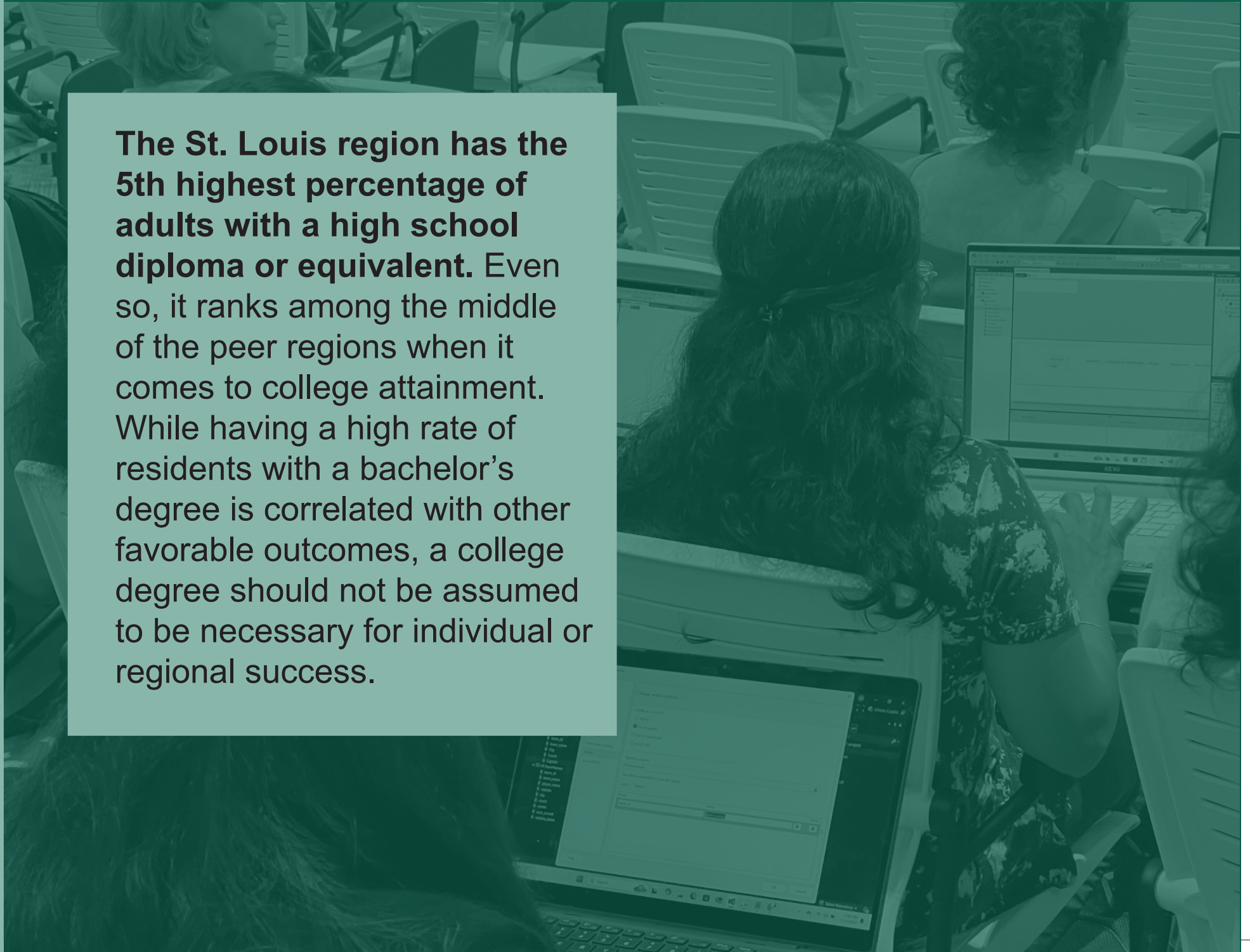
Measuring Success: Education

What is being measured? These measures show the percentage of the population aged 25 years and older by attained education level, including the percentage of the population that has not earned a high school (HS) diploma or equivalent and the percentage that has earned at least a bachelor's degree.

What makes this a good measure of success? The percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher is often used to measure the success of a region or community. Adults with this level of education tend to earn higher incomes and there are many other societal benefits that are associated with a more educated workforce and population. As Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL) states, "An educated workforce supports local business growth and is key to global competitiveness. Educational attainment is correlated with earning potential, while equity is critical to building a strong workforce."[10-01] The percent of adults without a HS diploma recognizes that the lack of a high school diploma can exclude workers from employment opportunities.

What is problematic about this measure? Both metrics assume that a certain level of education is valuable for individuals and is needed for jobs in the community. Neither metric accounts for adults with trade school education and other skill building training or certificate programs. Requirements of a degree for jobs, particularly when the degree is not actually needed, can exclude people from the applicant pool, decrease opportunity for economic mobility, and create a mismatch between the workforce and available jobs. Further, attainment of a college degree does not guarantee a job that matches an individual's education level, and large student debt burdens may be a barrier to individual success. Also, individuals that do not have a high school diploma may still be successful.

10-01 Greater St. Louis Inc. Measuring Growth-Appendix - STL 2030 Progress. https://stl2030progress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2030_Measuring-GrowthAppendix_PDF_Final.pdf

What Makes a Region Successful?

Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"The next generation finishes college and wants to live there/stay." —City of St. Louis Resident

"Viability with stable employers that attract college-educated residents that support schools and sustainability." —Jefferson County Resident

Peer Region Analysis: Education

The most favorable ranks on these two metrics are occupied by different regions. Only **Minneapolis, Raleigh,** and **Seattle** are among the 10 most favorable on both metrics. These regions also have relatively high average income levels. Regions that rank favorably on the bachelor's degree metric also tend to be favorable on several of the other WWS vitality metrics discussed in this report. However, some regions that do not have high rates of bachelor's degrees are quite successful in other areas. The high school (HS) diploma metric does not have similarly strong associations with other variables.

The 10 regions with the highest proportion of college graduates are among the top 11 regions for median household income. High levels of college attainment are also associated with favorable scores on vacancy, poverty, the well-being score, and GDP per capita.

College attainment is not strongly associated with employment gains. Of the 10 regions with the highest levels of college attainment, only two (**Raleigh and Austin**) are in the top 10 for job growth in either the short term (2019 to 2023) or longer term (2010 to 2023).

Regions that are among the most unfavorable for percentage with a bachelor's degree or higher are varied. They tend to have relatively low GDP and employment-population ratios. They also tend to rank among the most unfavorable on the income

variables, particularly average wage per job and per capita income, but they are mixed when it comes to poverty rates.

Salt Lake City is unusual in that it ranks in the middle on both education metrics but is among the most favorable on a relatively large number of vitality metrics, including poverty, concentrated poverty, median household income, and income inequality. It is also in the top 10 for employment growth, both for 2010 to 2023 and 2019 to 2023.

Regions with high rates of adults lacking a high school diploma also tend to have high proportions of foreign-born residents. Of the 10 regions with the highest percentage of adults with less than a high school education, seven are also in the top 10 for foreign-born population. **New Orleans** is the only one of these regions where immigrants make up less than 40% of this educational cohort. In **Dallas, Houston, Las Vegas, Miami, New York,** and **Riverside**, more than 60% of adults without a high school diploma were born outside the United States.

The **St. Louis** MSA is in the middle of the pack on bachelor's degrees but is among the most favorable on adults that do not have a high school education. **Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Kansas City,** and **Milwaukee** are similar to **St. Louis** and also have relatively low percentages of population lacking a high school diploma.

No High School Diploma or Equivalent

Percent of adults aged 25 and older, 2022

Rank	Region	Percent
1	Los Angeles	18.0
2	Riverside	17.5
3	Houston	14.9
4	Las Vegas	13.2
5	Miami	13.0
6	New York	12.5
7	Dallas	12.2
8	San Antonio	11.6
9	San Jose	11.2
10	New Orleans	10.9
11	Providence	10.8
12	Phoenix	10.6
13	San Francisco	10.6
United States		**10.4**
14	San Diego	10.3
15	Chicago	10.3
16	Oklahoma City	10.0
17	Memphis	9.6
18	Birmingham	9.6
19	Sacramento	9.4
20	Orlando	9.4
21	Indianapolis	9.2
22	Salt Lake City	8.9
23	Detroit	8.8
24	Tampa	8.7
25	Atlanta	8.5
26	Charlotte	8.5
27	Louisville	8.2
28	Cleveland	8.1
29	Austin	7.9
30	Columbus	7.9
31	Washington, D.C.	7.9
32	Boston	7.8
33	Baltimore	7.7
34	Philadelphia	7.7
35	Denver	7.6
36	Hartford	7.6
37	Nashville	7.6
38	Virginia Beach	7.6
39	Cincinnati	7.5
40	Jacksonville	7.5
41	Buffalo	7.4
42	Portland	7.3
43	Richmond	7.1
44	Seattle	6.9
45	Milwaukee	6.8
46	St. Louis	6.7
47	Kansas City	6.6
48	Raleigh	6.6
49	Minneapolis	5.8
50	Pittsburgh	4.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B15002)

Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Percent of adults aged 25 and older, 2022

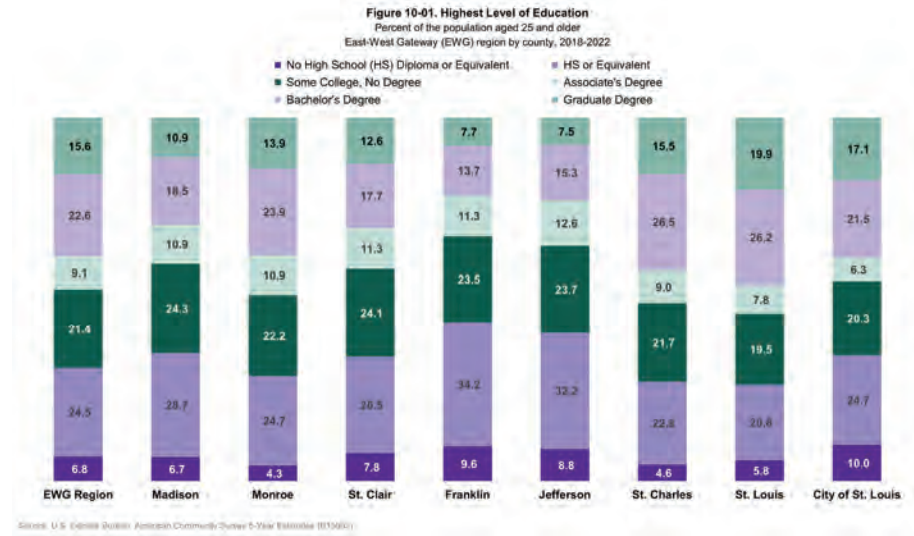| Rank	Region	Percent
1	San Jose	55.8
2	Washington, D.C.	54.5
3	San Francisco	53.6
4	Austin	52.1
5	Boston	51.4
6	Raleigh	50.8
7	Denver	49.4
8	Seattle	46.9
9	Minneapolis	45.1
10	Baltimore	44.4
11	New York	43.9
12	San Diego	43.0
13	Philadelphia	42.3
14	Richmond	42.1
15	Atlanta	41.8
16	Portland	41.7
17	Hartford	41.6
18	Chicago	41.1
19	Nashville	41.1
20	Charlotte	40.7
21	Columbus	40.0
22	Kansas City	39.7
23	Dallas	39.4
24	Milwaukee	39.3
25	Indianapolis	38.5
26	St. Louis	38.1
27	Pittsburgh	38.1
28	Salt Lake City	37.9
29	Los Angeles	37.6
30	Miami	37.0
31	Orlando	36.9
32	Cincinnati	36.9
33	Providence	36.7
34	Jacksonville	36.5
35	Sacramento	36.2
36	Cleveland	36.1
37	Houston	36.0
38	Buffalo	36.0
39	Birmingham	36.0
United States		**35.7**
40	Louisville	35.3
41	Tampa	35.0
42	Phoenix	34.9
43	New Orleans	34.7
44	Virginia Beach	34.7
45	Detroit	34.5
46	Oklahoma City	34.0
47	San Antonio	32.7
48	Memphis	31.9
49	Las Vegas	27.1
50	Riverside	24.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B15002)
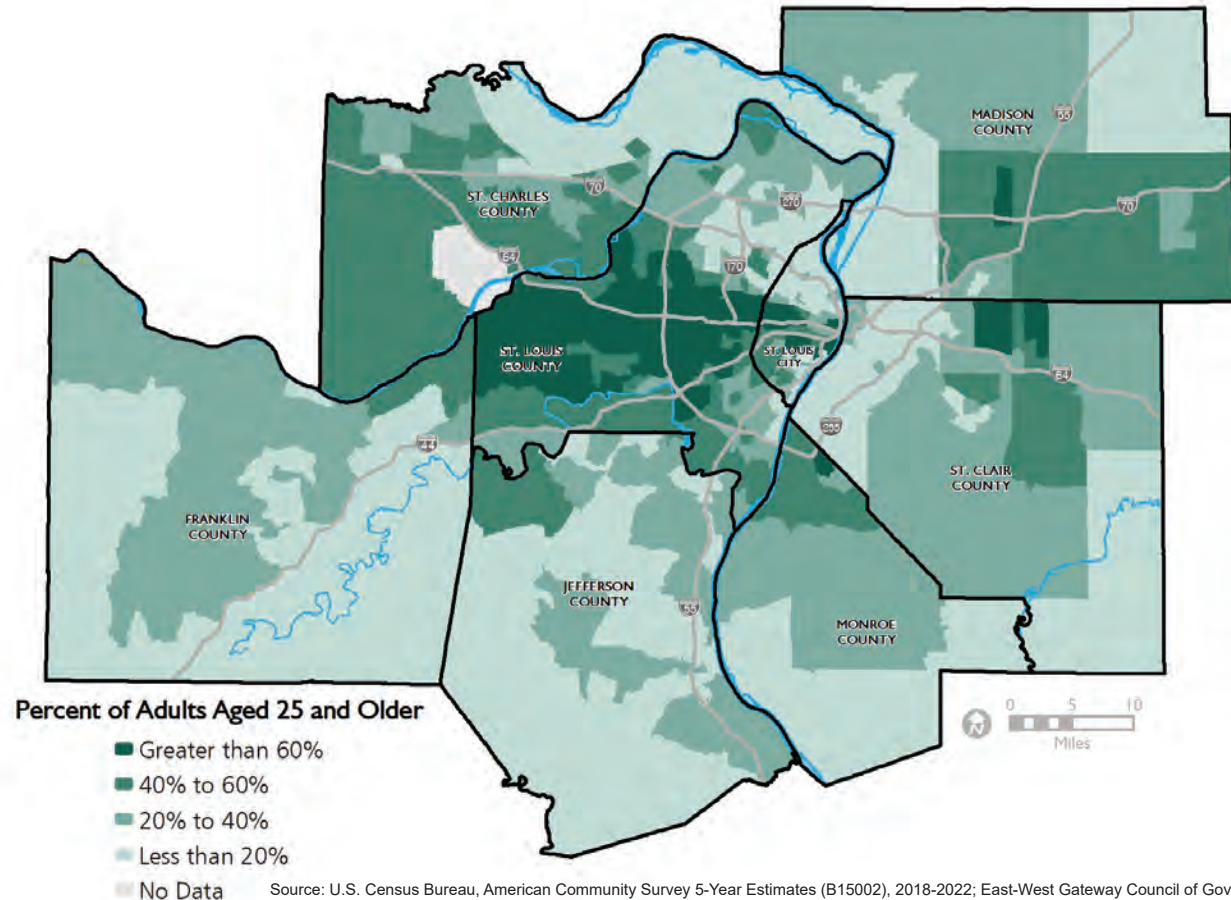
EWG Region Analysis: Education

Compared to the U.S. population, each county in the EWG region has a lower percentage of adults without a high school diploma (HS) or equivalent and half of the counties have a higher percentage of adults with at least a bachelor's degree. Figure 10-01 provides the percent of the adult population in each county and the region as whole by the highest level of education attained.

Within the region, St. Louis County has the highest percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher followed by St. Charles County and the city of St. Louis. St. Louis County also has the highest percentage of adults with graduate or professional degrees, followed by the city of St. Louis.

Map 10-01 depicts the percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher by census tract for the EWG region. Tracts in which more than 60% of adults have a college degree are concentrated in a contiguous block that stretches from the Midtown and Central West End neighborhoods in the city of St. Louis to Chesterfield and Wildwood in west St. Louis County. Other tracts with more than 60% college attainment can be found in Illinois around the cities of Edwardsville, O'Fallon, and Columbia.


Figure 10-01. Highest Level of Education
Percent of the population aged 25 and older
East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2018-2022

Map 10-01. Bachelor's Degree or Higher 2018-2022

Percent of Adults Aged 25 and Older
- Greater than 60%
- 40% to 60%
- 20% to 40%
- Less than 20%
- No Data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B15002), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Poverty

The St. Louis region has lower poverty and concentrated poverty rates than the country as a whole and ranks about average among the peer regions. Generally, this indicates that most households have sufficient income to meet a very basic level of needs. However, in St. Louis and across the country there are still many people living with very low income, and there are large racial and ethnic disparities.

Both metrics are associated with other vitality measures that are important for quality of life, including infant mortality and homicides. Additionally, lower poverty rates are associated with a smaller proportion of low-wage jobs and populations with higher levels of education attainment. Concentrated poverty rates tend to also be lower in regions with lower housing costs and smaller racial and disability-based disparities.
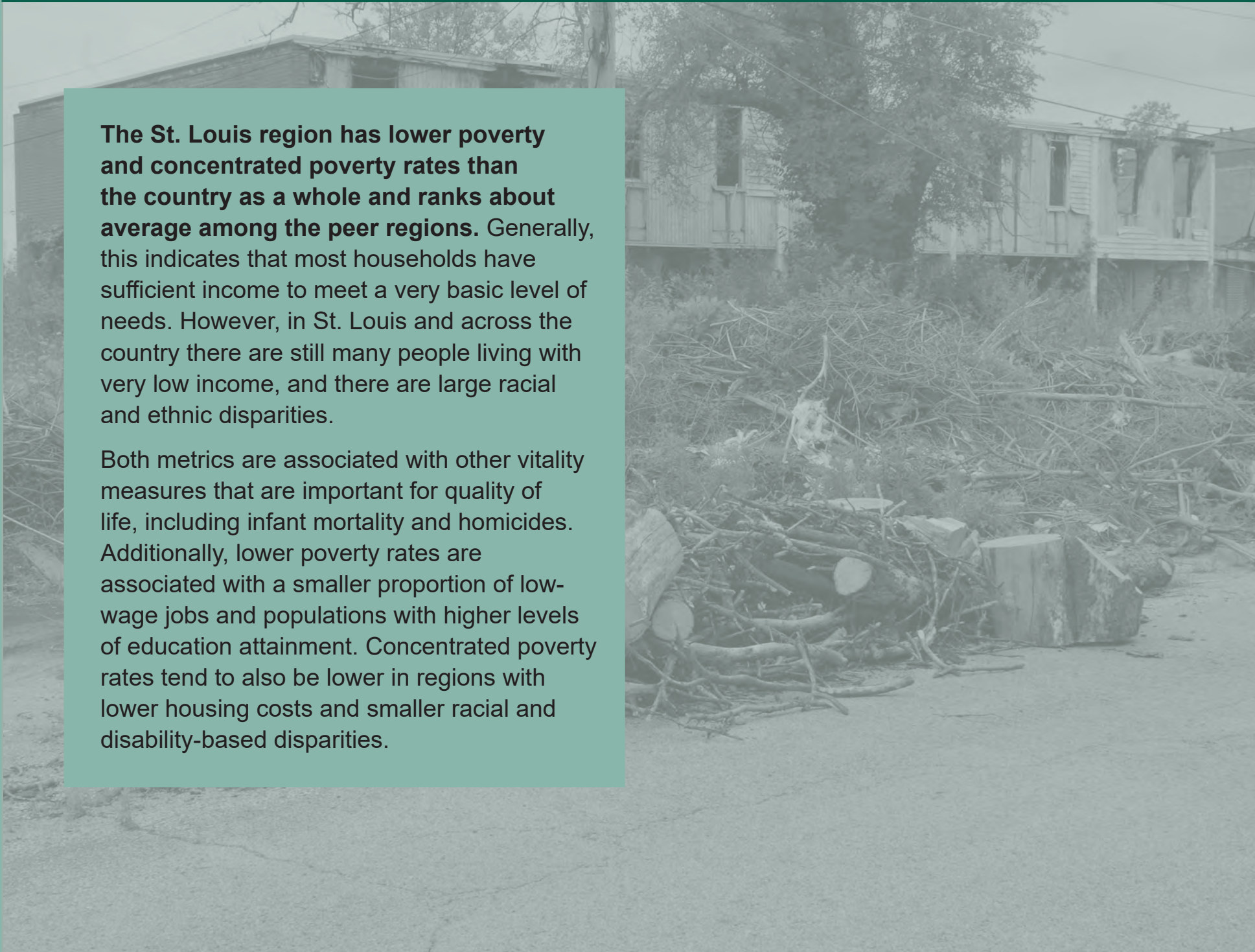
Measuring Success: Poverty

What is being measured? Poverty status is determined by comparing household income to income thresholds based on household size.[11-01]

The definition of concentrated poverty is a poverty rate of 40%, measured at the census tract level. Poverty researchers have used this threshold since at least the 1980s and have found it to be a good indicator of communities with a distinct set of challenges.[11-02]

What makes this a good measure of success? The poverty rate is the most commonly used measure of economic deprivation. It generally indicates the number of people in a region that lack sufficient income to meet a very basic level of need. Economic segregation, measured by concentrated poverty, is associated with increased crime, reduced opportunities for wealth building, and poorer financial well-being as well as relatively poor access to amenities, jobs, goods, and services compared to other communities in the region. Further, poverty and concentrated poverty may increase costs to local governments.

What is problematic about this measure? Poverty levels do not include all of the population that does not have enough income to meet basic needs because thresholds do not capture current living expenses and are not sensitive to geographic cost differences. The poverty threshold was developed in the 1960s and the method has long been recognized as outdated and a serious understatement of income sufficient for basic needs.[11-03] In addition, poverty thresholds are the same across the country, not accounting for a wide range in cost of living between the peer regions. The threshold in 2023 for a family of four for anywhere in the country was $30,900.

The outdated methods behind the official poverty measure have long been noted. A 1995 study found that a family of four with two children needs anywhere from 150% to 350% of the official poverty threshold to meet basic needs, depending on location.[11-04]

What Makes a Region Successful?
Thoughts from a survey of St. Louis region residents

"*Finding remedies for the crime, equity, and poverty issues the region faces must happen in order for the region to thrive again.*" –St. Louis County Resident

"*Successful regions have good economic development, attracting a large number of investments and enterprises, creating employment opportunities, and people have a high standard of living.*" –St. Charles County Resident

11-01 ACS Definitions Document https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2022_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf
11-02 Jargowsky, Paul and Mary Jo Bane. 1990. "Ghetto Poverty: Basic Questions", in Inner-City Poverty in the United States, edited by Laurence E. Lynn and Michael G.H. McGeary, Committee on Urban Policy, National Research Council; Wilson, William Julius. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner-City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. University of Chicago Press.
11-03 For more information on criticisms of the official poverty measure, see the WWS Poverty Working Paper at www.ewgateway.org/wws
11-04 Constance Citro and Robert Michael. Measuring Poverty: A New Approach. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 1995.

Peer Region Analysis: Poverty

The regional ranks on these two metrics are closely related, with communities tending to be favorable or unfavorable on both. Regional performance on these metrics is also associated with on other vitality metric rankings, including measures of income and well-being. The national rates on both metrics have improved in recent years with the St. Louis MSA following this trend. Within the **St. Louis** region there are familiar patterns of higher rates in the core of the region.

Regions that are favorable on these metrics have some common characteristics:

• The 10 regions with the lowest poverty rates also tend to rank among the most favorable on concentrated poverty, bachelor's degrees, income disparity, all four measures of income, homicides, vacancy rate, and the well-being score.

• West and Northwest peer regions generally rank among the most favorable of the peer regions on both metrics. However, these regions also tend to have higher costs of living, which raises the possibility that this measure underestimates the amount of economic hardship in these regions.

• Regions with high median household incomes tend to have lower rates of poverty and concentrated poverty, including **Salt Lake City; Denver; San Jose; Seattle; Washington, D.C.; and Raleigh.**

• Regions with the highest poverty rates tend to also be the least diverse (based on the diffusion score) and have relatively low median incomes, high rates of concentrated poverty, and low well-being scores.

Further, poverty and concentrated poverty have moderate to strong relationships with adverse health outcomes, including rates of heart disease, homicides, and HIV. In general, Southern and Midwest peer regions such as **New Orleans, Memphis, Detroit,** and **Cleveland** rank less favorably. **St. Louis** ranks better than most of the Midwest peer regions.

Poverty Rate

Individuals living in poverty as a percent of total population, 2022

1	New Orleans	15.7
2	Memphis	15.7
3	Oklahoma City	14.4
4	Houston	14.3
5	San Antonio	14.2
6	Birmingham	13.9
7	Detroit	13.8
8	Cleveland	13.7
9	Buffalo	13.5
10	Miami	13.2
11	Las Vegas	13.1
12	Los Angeles	12.9
13	New York	12.8
United States		**12.6**
14	Columbus	12.4
15	Milwaukee	12.4
16	Tampa	12.3
17	Louisville	12.1
18	Orlando	12.0
19	Riverside	12.0
20	Virginia Beach	11.8
21	Cincinnati	11.8
22	Philadelphia	11.4
23	Pittsburgh	11.2
24	Chicago	11.2
25	Sacramento	11.2
26	Providence	11.0
27	Jacksonville	11.0
28	**St. Louis**	**11.0**
29	Indianapolis	10.8
30	Phoenix	10.8
31	Richmond	10.7
32	Kansas City	10.7
33	San Diego	10.6
34	Dallas	10.3
35	Baltimore	10.1
36	Hartford	10.1
37	Atlanta	10.0
38	Nashville	9.8
39	Charlotte	9.8
40	Portland	9.5
41	Austin	9.4
42	San Francisco	9.2
43	Boston	9.2
44	Minneapolis	8.8
45	Seattle	8.6
46	Denver	8.3
47	Washington, D.C.	7.9
48	Raleigh	7.9
49	Salt Lake City	7.4
50	**San Jose**	**7.3**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (B17001)

Concentrated Poverty

Percent of poor residents living in census tracts with a poverty rate of 40% or more, 2018-2022

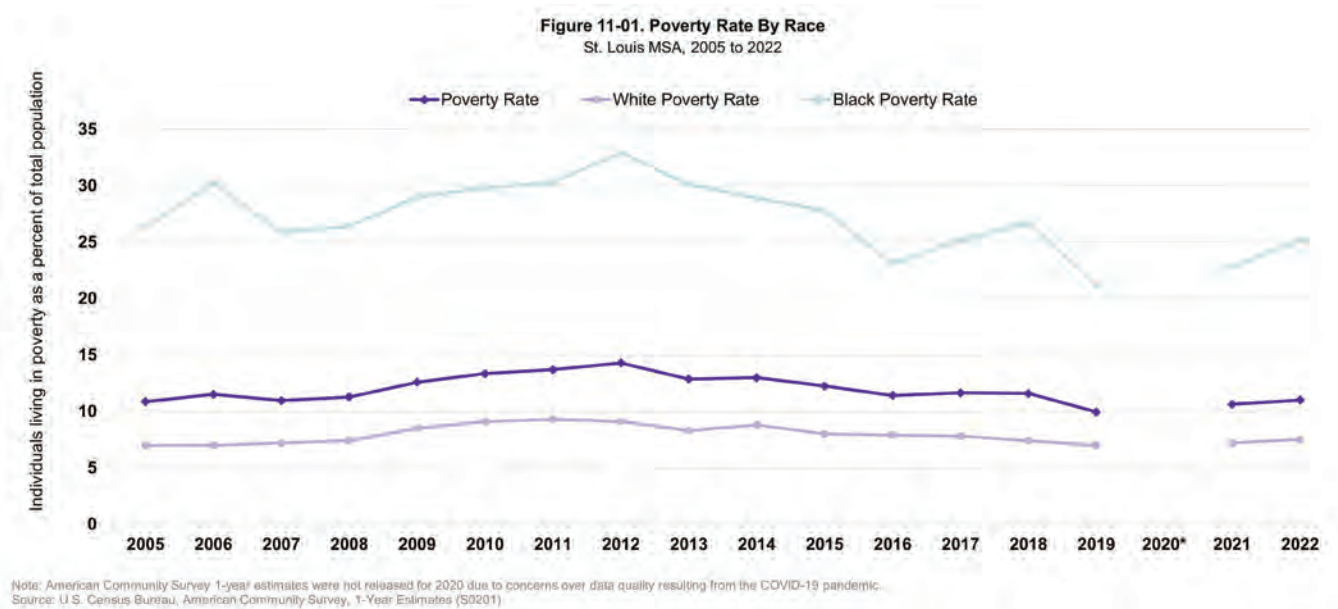|		
1	Memphis	23.2
2	Milwaukee	20.9
3	Detroit	20.3
4	Cleveland	20.2
5	Buffalo	18.8
6	Cincinnati	17.9
7	New Orleans	17.1
8	Philadelphia	14.8
9	Birmingham	13.7
10	Louisville	13.5
11	New York	13.2
12	Columbus	13.2
13	Houston	10.9
14	Baltimore	9.1
United States		**9.0**
15	Hartford	8.9
16	Chicago	8.6
17	Indianapolis	8.5
18	Richmond	8.3
19	Jacksonville	8.2
20	**St. Louis**	**8.2**
21	Oklahoma City	8.1
22	Austin	7.5
23	Pittsburgh	7.1
24	Dallas	6.9
25	Minneapolis	6.9
26	San Antonio	6.2
27	Atlanta	5.7
28	Virginia Beach	5.6
29	Miami	5.3
30	Kansas City	4.6
31	Sacramento	4.5
32	Charlotte	4.1
33	Las Vegas	4.0
34	Nashville	3.9
35	Phoenix	3.9
36	Tampa	3.8
37	Los Angeles	3.4
38	Boston	3.4
39	San Diego	3.3
40	San Francisco	3.3
41	Orlando	3.2
42	Raleigh	2.8
43	Providence	2.5
44	Washington, D.C.	1.8
45	Seattle	1.7
46	Portland	1.2
47	Riverside	1.0
48	San Jose	0.6
49	Denver	0.3
50	**Salt Lake City**	**0.2**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B17001)

EWG Region Analysis: Poverty

Poverty and concentrated poverty rates in the St. Louis MSA have been improving and generally follow national trends. However, more than one in 10 residents of the region are in poverty, and there are large differences between Black and white residents.

Figure 11-01 shows the poverty rate by year and race for the St. Louis MSA. The poverty rate rose for the region from 11% in 2007 to 14.3% in 2012, following the Great Recession. It fell to a low of 9.9% in 2019. Since then, it has increased to 10.4% (in 2023), following the COVID-19 pandemic.[11-05] Nationally, the poverty rate has been higher over the same period but followed the same trend. Federal stimulus payments during the pandemic assisted families, but these payments are not factored into the official poverty measure. See the working paper on poverty at ewgateway.org/wws for more discussion on how this factored into measures of poverty.

Figure 11-01. Poverty Rate By Race
St. Louis MSA, 2005 to 2022

Legend: Poverty Rate — White Poverty Rate — Black Poverty Rate

Y-axis: Individuals living in poverty as a percent of total population

Note: American Community Survey 1-year estimates were not released for 2020 due to concerns over data quality resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (S0201)

11-05 The regional poverty rate in 2020 is not known because the Census Bureau was not able to conduct the American Community Survey that year because of the pandemic.

Regionally and nationally, concentrated poverty has decreased. This is largely due to decreases in concentrated poverty among the Black population with a 5.4 percentage point decrease in the St. Louis MSA and an 11-point decrease for the country from 2008-2012 to 2018-2022. See Figure 11-02. These decreases may represent improvements in financial well-being but may also be the result of domestic migration, changes in the way people self-identity, and reporting errors.

Map 11-01 shows poverty rates in the EWG region, with significant concentrations in the northern parts of the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County and in the western portion of St. Clair County.
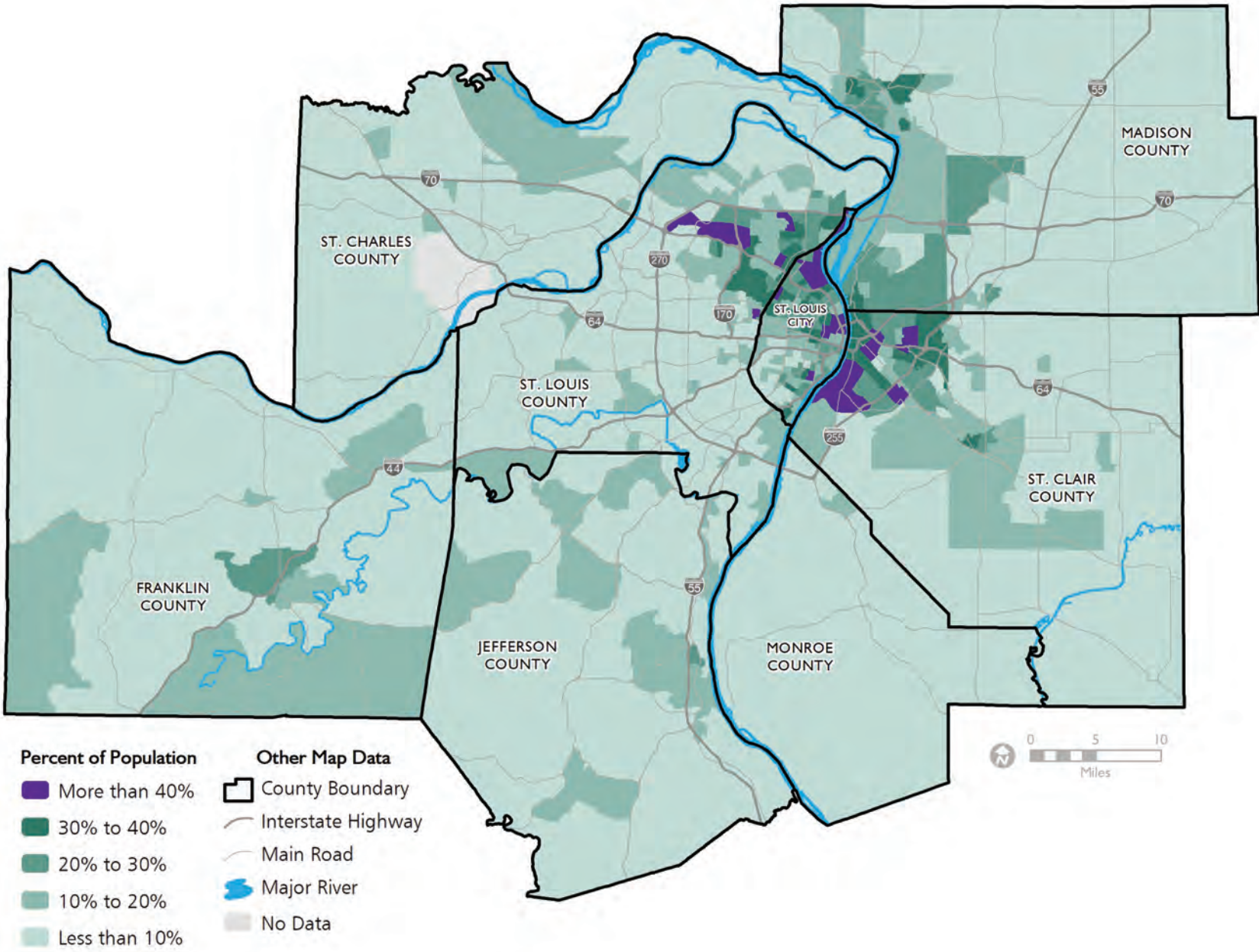
Poverty is not limited to the urban core with some people living in poverty in each county of the region. The communities with the most significant poverty rates are concentrated in the urban core but there are also tracts with rates greater than 20% in Franklin and Madison counties.

Figure 11-02. Concentrated Poverty by Race
Percent of poor residents living in census tracts with a poverty rate of 40% or more
St. Louis MSA and United States, 2008-2012, 2013-2017, and 2018-2022

■ 2008-2012   ■ 2013-2017   ■ 2018-2022
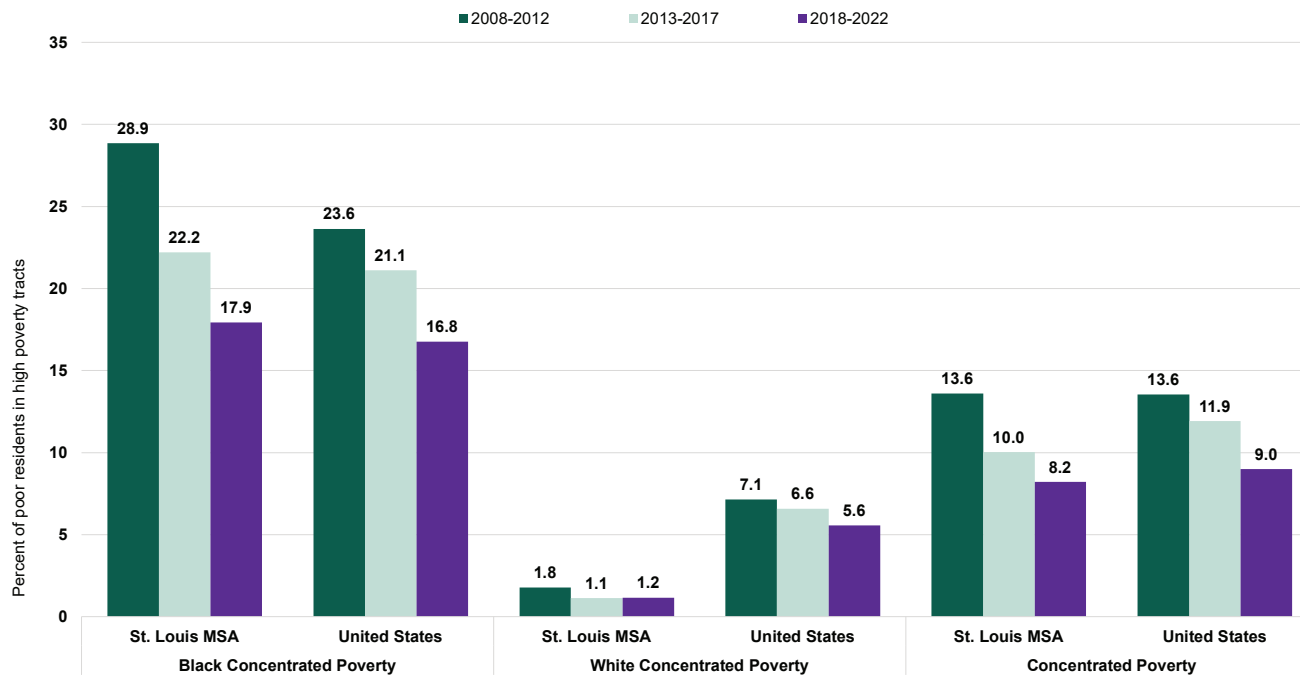
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates (B17001, B17001B, B17001H)

Map 11-01. Poverty & Concentrated Poverty, 2018-2022

Percent of Population
- More than 40%
- 30% to 40%
- 20% to 30%
- 10% to 20%
- Less than 10%

Other Map Data
- County Boundary
- Interstate Highway
- Main Road
- Major River
- No Data

MADISON COUNTY

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

ST. LOUIS CITY

ST. LOUIS COUNTY

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

FRANKLIN COUNTY

JEFFERSON COUNTY

MONROE COUNTY

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B17021), 2018-2022; East-West Gateway Council of Governments

Well-Being

Traditional metrics of regional success, such as GDP, income, and population growth, do not address quality of life, or whether individuals in a region are happy and satisfied with their lives. To assess overall well-being, the Commission on Reimagining Our Economy (CORE) developed an index that combines health and economic metrics. The St. Louis region ranks favorably on this measure of well-being, ranking 13th out of the 50 peer regions. The region's highest scores were in healthcare coverage, poverty, and labor force participation rate. Its lowest scores were in areas of civic engagement.

Measuring Success: Well-Being

What is being measured? Exercises in regional metrics aim to assess which conditions lead to fulfilling, satisfying, and happy lives among residents. Since life satisfaction is highly subjective, it is very difficult to measure at a regional scale.

Despite difficulties with measuring happiness, the concept is at the core of an exercise like WWS. Many respondents to the WWS survey expressed this in different ways when asked to define a successful region.

"People who live here are able to have a quality life, where they have access to opportunity, are able to be healthy, and can live their lives connected to their family, friends, and community."

"High quality of life (health, access to food, access to nature, quality public education, low stress from housing/transport/crime issues), Innovation beyond just business (eg, art/culture). Efficient and effective government."

"A successful region, to me, is one that provides a lot of opportunities to pursue goals and life fulfillment. This could be hobbies, careers, or relationships. It should also provide a sense of safety and a healthy environment through strong public services."

The CORE (Commission on Reimagining Our Economy) Score is an index that was developed by a commission formed by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The score is designed to measure how people are faring, with 11 indicators in four categories:

- Economic security: the ability of households to consistently meet their needs sustainably and with dignity
- Economic opportunity: the possibility of creating a better life
- Health: the physical well-being of individuals and their ability to access basic care
- Political efficacy: the degree to which Americans are participating in their democracy, have a voice in elections, and are represented by their elected officials

What makes this a good measure of success? The Commission consulted over 200 experts and held 31 listening sessions around the country to arrive at this measure of well-being. The rationale for this measure, as explained in the Commission's final report was: to "shift the focus from how the economy is doing to how Americans are doing."[12-01] The score "offers a people-centric view of how Americans are doing" using diverse indicators. "While traditional metrics capture economic growth or the state of the stock market, the Commission's new measurement, the CORE Score, speaks to how Americans live."[12-02]

What is problematic about this measure? Although the index components were selected based on an extensive series of listening sessions, the index does not directly measure whether individuals in different regions are happy or satisfied with their lives. The determinants of life satisfaction may vary considerably among individuals.

The index assumes that higher labor force participation rates are conducive to well-being, but some households may voluntarily make the choice for one or more adults to stay out of the labor force to maximize family quality of life.

The index does not address measures of disparities in economic outcomes among racial or other social groups.

As with most indices that combine several quantitative measures to arrive at a single score, it is difficult to know how much each component should be weighted, and which components are driving differences among regions.

12-01 GDP and the Dow are up. But what about American well-being? Wall Street Journal, 4-27-2024
12-02 Advancing a People-First Economy, 2023 https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/publication/downloads/2023_CORE_People-First-Economy.pdf

Peer Region Analysis: Well-Being

Among the peer regions, CORE scores range from a low of 4.43 in **Riverside** to a high of 6.34 in **Minneapolis**. Scores can range from zero to 10 with 10 being the best possible score. In 2021, the peer region average was about in the middle on this range at 5.43. The score for the United States was slightly lower at 4.91. The peer Midwest regions are all above the peer region average.

Map 12-01 shows well-being scores for the 50 peer regions. The top 10 scores included a mix of both fast-growing regions, such as **Raleigh** and **Denver**, and slow-growing regions such as **Milwaukee** and **Pittsburgh**. Conversely, the 10 regions with the lowest scores included fast-growing metros such as **Las Vegas** and **Orlando**, and slower-growing regions such as **Memphis** and **New Orleans**.

The St. Louis MSA is in the highest third of regions, with a score of 5.75. The MSA scores the highest in the categories of overall health with high points for healthcare coverage followed by poverty and labor force participation rate, which all had scores higher than seven. The worst score for the **St. Louis** MSA was on political voice with a poor score specifically in civic participation. See Figure 12-01.
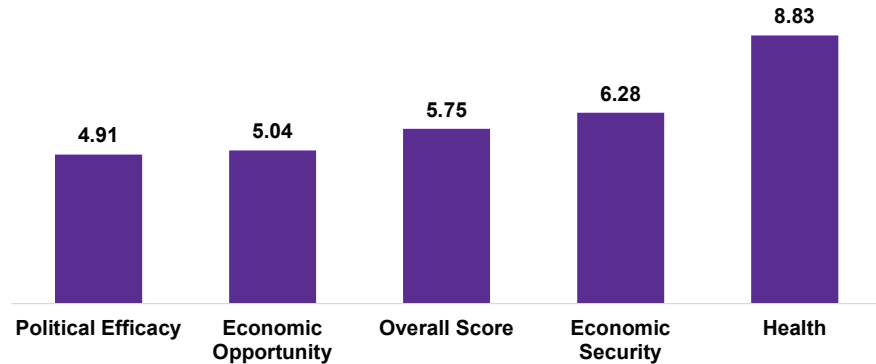
Well-Being Score

CORE Score, 2021

1	**Minneapolis**	**6.34**
2	Washington, D.C.	6.15
3	Boston	6.14
4	San Francisco	5.96
5	San Jose	5.96
6	Raleigh	5.86
7	Seattle	5.85
8	Milwaukee	5.85
9	Denver	5.83
10	Pittsburgh	5.83
11	Baltimore	5.79
12	Austin	5.78
13	**St. Louis**	**5.75**
14	Cincinnati	5.74
15	Philadelphia	5.73
16	Kansas City	5.72
17	Cleveland	5.70
18	Hartford	5.69
19	Buffalo	5.67
20	Columbus	5.64
21	Indianapolis	5.63
22	Chicago	5.63
23	Portland	5.59
24	Richmond	5.52
25	Detroit	5.52
26	Providence	5.51
27	New York	5.50
Peer Average		**5.43**
28	Salt Lake City	5.40
29	Nashville	5.39
30	Atlanta	5.35
31	Charlotte	5.35
32	Virginia Beach	5.32
33	Jacksonville	5.30
34	San Diego	5.20
35	Louisville	5.15
36	Sacramento	5.14
37	Dallas	5.12
38	Oklahoma City	5.10
39	Tampa	5.05
40	Phoenix	5.05
41	Birmingham	4.94
42	Los Angeles	4.92
43	Miami	4.91
44	New Orleans	4.89
45	Orlando	4.88
46	Houston	4.75
47	San Antonio	4.74
48	Memphis	4.67
49	Las Vegas	4.50
50	**Riverside**	**4.43**

Source: CORE Score

Figure 12-01. Core Score by Category
St. Louis MSA, 2021

Political Efficacy	Economic Opportunity	Overall Score	Economic Security	Health
4.91	5.04	5.75	6.28	8.83

Source: CORE Score

Map 12-01. CORE Score, Peer Regions, 2021

Seattle
Portland
Minneapolis
Milwaukee
Detroit
Buffalo
Providence
Boston
Hartford
Chicago
Pittsburgh
New York
Cleveland
Columbus
Philadelphia
Salt Lake City
Sacramento
Indianapolis
Baltimore
San Francisco
Denver
Kansas City
Cincinnati
Washington, D.C.
San Jose
Louisville
Richmond
Las Vegas
St Louis
Virginia Beach
Los Angeles
Nashville
Raleigh
Riverside
Oklahoma City
Memphis
Charlotte
San Diego
Atlanta
Phoenix
Dallas
Birmingham
Jacksonville
Austin
Orlando
San Antonio
New Orleans
Houston
Tampa
Miami

CORE Score
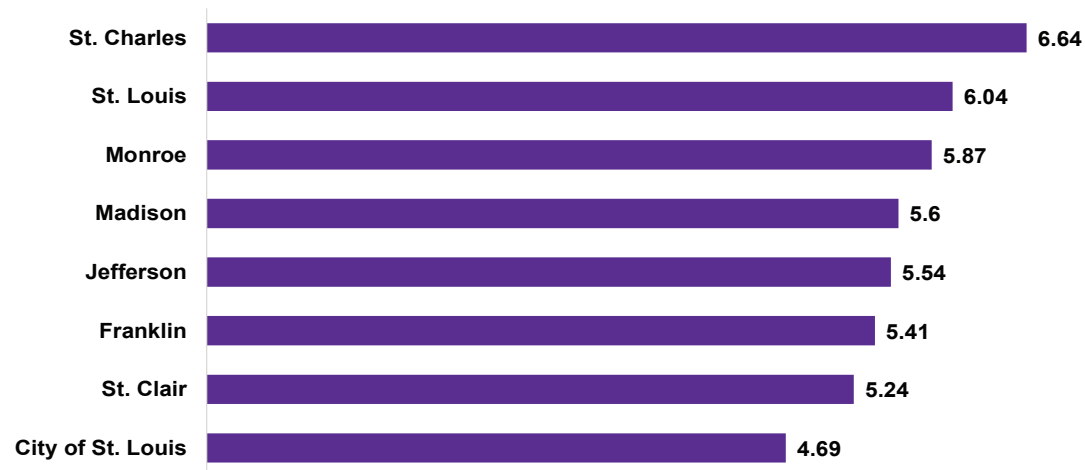
4.43   6.34

Source: CORE Score, 2021

EWG Region Analysis: Well-Being

In the EWG region, the aggregate CORE score appears to be strongly influenced by economic metrics. The highest-ranking counties on the CORE score were St. Charles and St. Louis counties. These counties ranked highest on measures of household financial resilience, economic opportunity, education level, and wage growth. The lowest CORE scores were in St. Clair County and the city of St. Louis. These two jurisdictions were the lowest ranking on measures of economic security, poverty, and wage growth. Most of the counties in the region had higher scores than the national average and most of the peer regions. See Figure 12-02.

The county rankings on individual components of well-being varied. The top-ranked jurisdictions for civic participation were Monroe County and the city of St. Louis. The top two for health insurance coverage were Madison and St. Charles counties.

Figure 12-02. Well-Being (CORE) Score

East-West Gateway (EWG) region by county, 2021

County	Score
St. Charles	6.64
St. Louis	6.04
Monroe	5.87
Madison	5.6
Jefferson	5.54
Franklin	5.41
St. Clair	5.24
City of St. Louis	4.69

Source: CORE Score

Opportunity

What are our goals and performance measures for opportunity? *The following are the goals and performance measures established in East-West Gateway's long-range transportation plan (LRP), 2030 Measuring Progress from Greater St. Louis Inc. (GSL), and OneSTL's regional plan for sustainability.*

GSL identified median household income (MHI) growth as one of its four north star metrics with a goal to increase overall MHI by an annual average of 4.4% through 2030 and to reduce the Black-to-white gap in MHI by 50% ($18,000) by 2030. The agency recognizes the importance of closing the gap for "strengthening families and the economy."

The agency tracks several additional data points that are related to the WWS opportunity vitality metrics, including occupation-average annual wage distribution by race, cost of living, and educational attainment. Related to well-being, under the category of "quality of life" the agency recognizes that "talent is attracted to great places to live." They measure this by several metrics related to parks, art, and entertainment.

OneSTL also has several related metrics for this section, including personal income per capita, the Gini index, poverty and concentrated poverty, education attainment, voter participation, and racial disparity in median household income.

What is St. Louis doing for opportunity? The following are a sampling of activities, programs, plans, and studies.

Forward through Ferguson was created to implement and advocate for the recommendations laid out in the Ferguson Commission report, focusing on systemic change to address racial and economic inequality in the St. Louis region.

The Federal Reserve Bank Institute for Economic Equity is working to support an economy that works for people of all races, ethnicities, genders, and no matter where a person lives. The institute examines how people interact with the economy with the goal of addressing structural and institutional disparities that inhibit people from participating in and benefiting from the economy.

City of St. Louis Equity Indicators Project measures racial equity across 72 indicators that highlight the three priority areas of the Ferguson Commission: youth at the center, opportunity to thrive, and justice for all.

LaunchCode, headquartered in St. Louis and founded in 2013, is a not for profit that runs a free program to train and place program participants in high-demand tech jobs. The program has a focus on building cohorts of diverse backgrounds. A large proportion of the program's graduates have been from marginalized or underrepresented communities.

UMSL established the **Geospatial Collaborative** to develop the next generation of geospatial scientists. The collaborative will work with students from university level to programs for students in kindergarten through high school. Additionally, they will provide programing to other faculty at universities and industry partners.

Missouri Works Initiative is a program with a goal to eliminate barriers to help connect people in Missouri to careers in different building trades. The program hopes to help people develop "life-sustaining" careers.

Mission: St. Louis provides a number of programs to empower St. Louisans to break the cycle of poverty. The multi-generational approach includes programs that help students prepare for high school, adults achieve stable employment, seniors and people with disabilities remain in their homes, and community members stay out of conflict and free.

Access to Care Data Book is an annual publication by the Regional Health Commission, which is a part of Community Health Commission-Missouri. The report reviews the strength of the health care safety net in St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis for those who do not have health insurance or are underinsured.

Employment Connection services nearly 2,000 people a year who face barriers to employment. The agency was established to assist ex-offenders in finding employment, recognizing the role a job can have in reducing the likelihood of recidivism. The agency now also provides services for substance abusers, unhoused, high school dropouts, women on welfare, veterans, and non-custodial fathers.

The Community Action Agency of St. Louis County (CAASTLC) is working to end poverty and help those currently in poverty. CAASTLC does this by providing services to 44,000 people a year and through innovative programs, such as the Community Action Poverty Simulation. This program provides policymakers, services providers, and others with a better understanding of what life is like for people who live in poverty.

The Missouri Job Center of St. Charles County offers employment services, such as career exploration, job search assistance, and skills training to help individuals improve their employability and earning potential. They have programs that help job seekers acquire skills and experience while earning income, including Registered Apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and youth programs.

The **Jackie Joyner-Kersee Foundation** has a mission to "carry out Jackie's dream to provide youth in East St. Louis the opportunity to Win in Life." The organization provides after school programming, youth athletics, youth education programs, and summer camps. The youth education programs contain a focus on in demand knowledge with its STEAM programming (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math).

St. Louis Artworks (SLAW) offers paid apprenticeships that use art to teach teenagers art, life, communication, and jobs skills. The youth focus on personal health, fiscal literacy, and environmental stewardship and have the opportunity to practice public speaking while building a portfolio of work.

A **Where We Stand** update in January 2020 drew on nearly 50 years of economic data to document the changes in income in the St. Louis region compared to the peer regions and the nation as a whole. The analysis provides a look at changes decade by decade, finding that there is increased concentration of income and wealth in a handful of metropolitan regions.

What else is St. Louis doing? T*ell us what to add to the database of regional goals, performance measures, activities, plans, programs, and studies at www.ewgateway.org/wws*