OPPORTUNITY INDEX

Summary of findings for states & counties

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OPPORTUNITY NATION
THE SHARED PLAN TO RESTORE OPPORTUNITY

MEASURE OF AMERICA
of the Social Science Research Council

OPPORTUNITY IN AMERICA: 2011-2015

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At the core of America is a shared belief that no matter how humble your origins, with hard work and perseverance, you can improve your prospects in life and give your children a shot at a secure and productive future.

But today our American Dream is at risk. Too often your zip code predetermines your destiny.

This is unacceptable.

With five years of Opportunity Index data, 2011-2015, this report offers the chance to not only reflect on a half-decade of both progress and setbacks for opportunity as the country has emerged from the Great Recession, but also to accelerate bipartisan, cross-sector solutions that benefit all of us.

Data such as the Opportunity Index helps to identify trends, spot problems, elevate bright spots and bring unlikely allies together to advance a shared goal: expanded access to the American Dream.

Commonly used measures to gauge economic well-being include gross domestic product and unemployment rates. But these alone do not provide residents, community leaders or elected officials the complete picture needed to understand the barriers to opportunity where they live – and take steps to overcome these obstacles.

• Do jobs pay family-sustaining wages?
• Are students graduating from high school on time?
• Do I have access to healthy food?
• Is my community safe?

The Opportunity Index measures broad access to opportunity in communities across the county. From preschool enrollment to income inequality, from volunteerism rates to access to health care, expanding opportunity depends on the intersection of multiple economic, educational and civic factors.

We can't pick our ethnicity, the family we are born into, or our IQ. But if you work hard and play by the rules, your zip code should not condemn you to an inescapable economic fate. In a free society, some inequality is unavoidable. But inequality without the chance for mobility is economically inefficient and unjust.

As the 2016 presidential race gathers momentum, it is more critical than ever that candidates and voters have a clear picture of where access to opportunity is expanding and constricting, as well as a deeper understanding of effective solutions by public, private and nonprofit sectors that can improve the lives, prospects and communities of Americans.

Let's make sure that expanding opportunity remains at the top of our national dialogue and that it defines the next president's agenda. If that happens, five years from now we will be celebrating even more significant gains in Opportunity Index Scores across the country, and our youth, our economy and our communities will reap the benefits.

Background

The Opportunity Index is an annual composite measure of key economic, educational and civic factors that expand or restrict access to upward mobility. Together they provide a snapshot of what opportunity looks like at the state and county levels that can help communities and leaders identify concrete solutions to lagging conditions. The Opportunity Index launched in September 2011 and is updated each fall. This report offers updated calculations for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. (which is counted as the 51st state in the Index) and over 2,600 counties, which contain over 99% of the U.S. population for 2015, as well as a discussion of the changes in opportunity over the five-year period 2011-2015.

What is opportunity and how is it being measured?

Opportunity can be defined in many ways, but typically the term encompasses the range of circumstances that open doors to economic mobility and human progress. Opportunity stems from many sources. Some are factors that individuals cannot change and which are entirely beyond their control, such as their racial or ethnic heritage, or who their parents are. Such factors exert significant influence over people's lives; those born to parents who did not graduate high school, for example, tend to have fewer educational and employment opportunities than those born to parents with college degrees.

A second source of opportunity is an individual's personal characteristics and attributes. Most of us can think of women and men whose uncommon persistence, charisma, intelligence, good looks or physical prowess opened doors, providing a route out of disadvantage.

A third source of opportunity stems from the conditions present in different communities. These conditions can expand or constrict upward mobility and are often amenable to policy change. Are there decent jobs? Enough doctors? High schools that graduate most students and prepare them for good jobs or higher education? Are the streets safe? Are

young people meaningfully engaged?

The indicators included in the Opportunity Index do not measure the first and second set of factors above, i.e. factors that are beyond a person's control or that reside at the level of the individual, important though they are. Instead, the Opportunity Index focuses on the third set of factors, namely the conditions present in different communities. These factors are not fixed or beyond our control as a society but rather are responsive to policy change and community action that can improve people's lives and strengthen neighborhoods and networks.

The Opportunity Index takes a comprehensive approach to measuring access to opportunity by including both non-economic and economic indicators. The result is a data-rich tool designed to help local communities connect economic, educational and civic issues to begin the process of identifying concrete, cross-sector solutions to complex problems.

The indicators that make up the Opportunity Index fall into three main dimensions: Jobs and Local Economy; Education; and Community Health and Civic Life.

Opportunity Index Dimensions:

Jobs and Local Economy:

The areas measured by the Opportunity Index in this dimension include: employment; wages; poverty; income inequality; access to banking; affordable housing; and access to high-speed Internet. The availability of jobs is critical to opportunity. But jobs are not the only ingredient for a prosperous and sustainable economy, nor are all jobs equally good at creating meaningful opportunity. An overabundance of low-wage jobs, for instance, does not create optimal conditions for long-term opportunity. Americans must be prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow, and also be able to accumulate savings to weather unpredictable economic downturns, or make the large expenditures—a house in a good school system, college tuition, etc.—necessary for upward mobility. The economic status of families has significant repercussions for their children's life chances.

Education:

The educational indicators measured by the Opportunity Index include: preschool enrollment; on-time high school graduation; and the percentage of adults with at least a two-year college (associate) degree. Access to a high-quality education is vital to opportunity, particularly in the 21st century. High school and college graduates earn significantly more every year and over their lifetimes than high school and college dropouts. Many students, particularly low-income black and Latino youth, live in communities whose high schools graduate fewer than 60 percent of their students every year. The quality of a public school is often tied closely to the socioeconomic status of the families it serves and what neighborhood it is located in. Several studies show positive outcomes for low-income children and teens that live in communities with more affluent neighbors, including increased childhood IQ and a decrease in leaving school prematurely.

Community Health and Civic Life:

The community health and civic life indicators measured by the Opportunity Index include: membership in community groups; volunteerism; community safety; access to health care; access to healthy food; and the percentage of young adults ages 16 to 24 who are neither working nor in school. Evidence shows that community institutions, norms and relationships, together known as social capital, play an important role in expanding people's opportunities, including attending good schools and finding good jobs. Volunteerism and group membership, two indicators of civic engagement that contribute to the accrual of social capital, are closely linked to community trust and solving collective problems. If residents do not feel safe within their own communities, children may struggle in the classroom and adults may be less able to establish the links and connections for a cohesive social network. Health suffers when people do not feel safe enough to exercise outdoors, when the lack of full-service grocery stores makes obtaining fresh produce difficult, and when medical care is inaccessible.

Opportunity Index Indicators:

Table 1. Opportunity Index Indicators

Economy

Jobs	Unemployment rate (%)
Wages	Median household income (2010 $)
Poverty	Poverty (% of population below poverty line)
Inequality	80/20 Ratio (ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that of the 20th percentile)
Access to Banking	Banking Institutions (commercial banks, savings institutions and credit unions per 10,000 residents)
Affordable Housing	Households spending less than 30% of household income on housing costs (%)
Internet Access	High-speed Internet (% of households for states; 5-level categories for counties)

Education

Preschool	Preschool (% ages 3 and 4 in school)
High School Graduation	On-time high school graduation (% of freshman who graduate in four years)
Postsecondary Completion	Associate degree or higher (% of adults 25 and older)

Community

| Group Membership	Percentage of adults ages 18 and over involved in social, civic, sports and religious groups
Volunteerism	Percentage of adults ages 18 and older who did volunteer work any time in the previous year
Youth Economic and Academic Inclusion	Young people not in school and not working (% ages 16-24)
Community Safety	Violent crime (per 100,000 population)
Access to Health Care	Doctors (per 100,000 population)
Access to Healthy Food	Grocery stores and produce vendors (per 10,000 population)

Methodology:

The Opportunity Index is constructed using official statistics from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Federal Communications Commission, and the U.S. Department of Justice. The Methodological Note provides complete sources of indicators. The state Opportunity Index is made up of sixteen indicators that are combined to yield a score from 1 to 100 in each of the above-mentioned three dimensions. Each state and the District of Columbia are then awarded an overall Opportunity Score on a 100-point scale. The county Opportunity Index is made up of fourteen indicators because data for two indicators related to community engagement and volunteerism are not available at the county level. Counties are awarded "Opportunity Grades," letter grades from A+ to F, for their overall performance. See the Methodological Note for full details on construction of the Index.

	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS	SCORES	QUANTITY
STATE	$	16	1-100	All 50 states & the District of Columbia.
COUNTY	📖 🤝	14	A+ - F	2,600+

The Opportunity Index measures data from 2011-2015. The annual report is released each Fall.

The Opportunity Index does not measure factors that are beyond a person's control or that reside at the level of the individual. The Index focuses namely on the conditions present in different communities. These factors are particularly useful because they are amenable to policy change and community actions.

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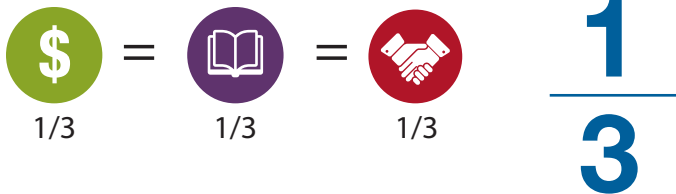
All the indicators are weighted equally. Each of the three dimensions makes up one-third of the final Index value.

Sources:

- American Community Survey
- County Business Patterns and Population Estimates Program
- National Center for Education Statistics
- U.S. Bureau of Labor
- U.S. Census Bureau
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Visit the Opportunity Index to view state rankings, your hometown's score and much more at www.OpportunityIndex.org
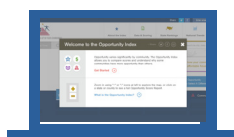
National Findings

State Opportunity Scores and Change Since 2011

The overall Opportunity Score for the United States for 2015 is 54.0 on a 100-point scale, a slight increase over the 2014 score of 52.7 and a heartening 4.4 point increase from the 2011 score of 49.6. The highest-scoring state on the 2015 Opportunity Index was Vermont, which held this same position in 2011, as well as in 2014. The lowest-scoring state was New Mexico. New England performed well on the Opportunity Index, with four of its states in the top five spots, whereas states from the Southwest (New Mexico and Nevada) and the South (Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi) occupied the bottom five spots on the state index.

Top-ranked Vermont nabbed first place despite coming in twelfth in the Jobs and Local Economy dimension and fifth in education. Its blue ribbon was guaranteed by a strong performance across a wide range of indicators in addition to its miles-ahead finish in the Community Health and Civic Life dimension. North Dakota, its economy fueled by the fracking boom, came in first in Jobs and Local Economy. New Jersey took first place in Education. Nevada came in last in the Education dimension, while Arkansas took last place in Community Health and Civic Life. Mississippi took the bottom spot in the Jobs and Local Economy dimension.

Table 2. State Rankings by Opportunity Index Score: 2015

Rank	State	Opportunity Score	Jobs & Local Economy	Education	Community Health & Civic Life
	United States	54	53.5	52	56.6
1	Vermont	**66.0**	61.6	59.6	**76.9**
2	Massachusetts	63.1	60.4	63.4	65.6
3	Connecticut	62.8	59.2	64	65.2
4	North Dakota	61.6	**68.2**	55.2	61.3
5	New Hampshire	61.4	66.1	61.7	56.3
6	New Jersey	61.4	58.5	**64.1**	61.5
7	Nebraska	61.4	64.3	57.4	62.3
8	Iowa	60.5	62.4	58.3	60.8
9	Maryland	60.4	61.9	57.9	61.3
10	Virginia	58.9	59.1	57	60.6
11	Kansas	58.8	60.8	54.8	60.7
12	Minnesota	58.7	61.7	53.2	61.2
13	Hawaii	58.5	61.7	55.8	58
14	Utah	58.5	62.8	52.4	60.2
15	New York	58.4	52.2	54.3	68.7
16	Maine	58.4	58.9	54.3	62
17	Pennsylvania	57.8	57.3	55.2	60.8

18	Wisconsin	57.6	58.1	55.9	58.7
19	District of Columbia	57.5	48.9	57.2	66.3
20	South Dakota	57.2	63	49.4	59
21	Colorado	56.5	59.9	53.3	56.3
22	Illinois	56.4	54.4	56.5	58.4
23	Wyoming	56.3	62.1	47.7	59
24	Delaware	56	63.2	51.2	53.5
25	Rhode Island	55.9	53.9	52.4	61.4
26	Montana	55.4	55.6	51.5	59.2
27	Missouri	55	53.2	53	58.7
28	Ohio	54.8	55.6	50.6	58.2
29	Washington	54.5	56.8	48.1	58.5
30	Alaska	53.9	61.5	41.3	59
31	Indiana	52.9	55.2	51.2	52.4
32	Kentucky	52.6	50.8	50.7	56.3
33	Idaho	52.3	56.9	48.1	52
34	Michigan	52.2	53	48	55.7
35	North Carolina	52	52.2	51.1	52.6
36	Texas	51.9	52.4	53.6	49.7
37	California	51.7	49.9	52.2	53.1
38	Florida	51.3	52.6	48.3	53.1
39	Oregon	51	52.7	41.2	59.2
40	Tennessee	50.9	49.6	50.7	52.4
41	Oklahoma	50.8	52.9	49.9	49.5
42	South Carolina	48.7	49.5	47.3	49.3
43	West Virginia	48.6	49.3	43.2	53.3
44	Arizona	47.7	50.5	42.5	50.2
45	Arkansas	47.6	47.7	49.3	45.7
46	Alabama	47.4	47.5	46.7	48.2
47	Georgia	46.7	47.8	44.6	47.6
48	Louisiana	45.6	45.9	43	48
49	Mississippi	45.3	39.7	45	51.2
50	Nevada	43.8	49.6	35.9	46
51	New Mexico	43.8	43.7	39.8	48

Over the half-decade between 2011 and 2015, every state's Opportunity Score either improved or held con-stant. Though the overall picture was one of nearly universal improvement, some states made much faster progress than others. The five most-improved states in terms of access to opportunity were Nevada, Kentucky, Texas, Mississippi and Florida. The five states that made the slowest progress were Oregon, Minnesota, South Dakota, New Mexico and Wisconsin.

In terms of the percentage change from 2011 to 2015, Nevada's score increased more than that of any other state in the last half-decade, yet the state has remained at the bottom, in 50th or 51st place. Nevada's improve-ment was due to several important factors: its best-in-the-nation performance in reducing the poverty rate, an increase in the share of households spending less than 30 percent of their income on housing, improvement in the on-time high school graduation rate, and an increase in the share of adults involved in group membership.

Oregon, on the other hand, was the slowest mover over this half decade, with an increase in its Opportunity Index score of just 0.40 percent. It moved down in the rankings from 29th to 39st place. The recent drop for Oregon is partially related to the change in the measurement of on-time high school graduation. The older measurement (AFGR) for the high school graduation rate was 78 percent in 2012. However, the newer measurement (ACGR) rate for the same year is 68 percent. The difference between the two measurements shows that there is some discrepancy between the two methods and can explain much of Oregon's recent decline in the education rankings.
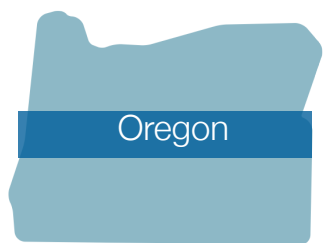
Table 3. State Rankings 2011-2015

Most Improved States 2011-2015:

Nevada

| State	2011 Ranking	2015 Ranking	Rank Change
Nevada	51	50	1
Kentucky	39	32	7
Texas	42	36	6
Mississippi	50	49	1
Florida	38	38	0

States That Lost the Most Ground 2011-2015:

Oregon

State	2011 Ranking	2015 Ranking	Rank Change
Wisconsin	12	18	-7
New Mexico	46	51	-5
Minnesota	6	12	-6
South Dakota	11	20	-9
Oregon	29	39	-10

In addition to the overall improvement in scores between 2011 and 2015, there was a positive trend in each of the three dimensions that make up the Index. However, in no dimension did every state improve, though this was nearly the case in one of the three dimensions. Fifty states improved in the Jobs and Local Economy dimension. Only New Mexico saw its score worsen slightly. In the Education dimension, 46 states improved, two saw no change, and three saw their scores decline: Minnesota, and Oregon and Vermont. In the Community Health and Civic Life dimension, 31 states improved, 11 saw no meaningful change, and nine declined: the District of Columbia, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Figure 1. Changes in Index Dimension Scores for States, 2011-2015
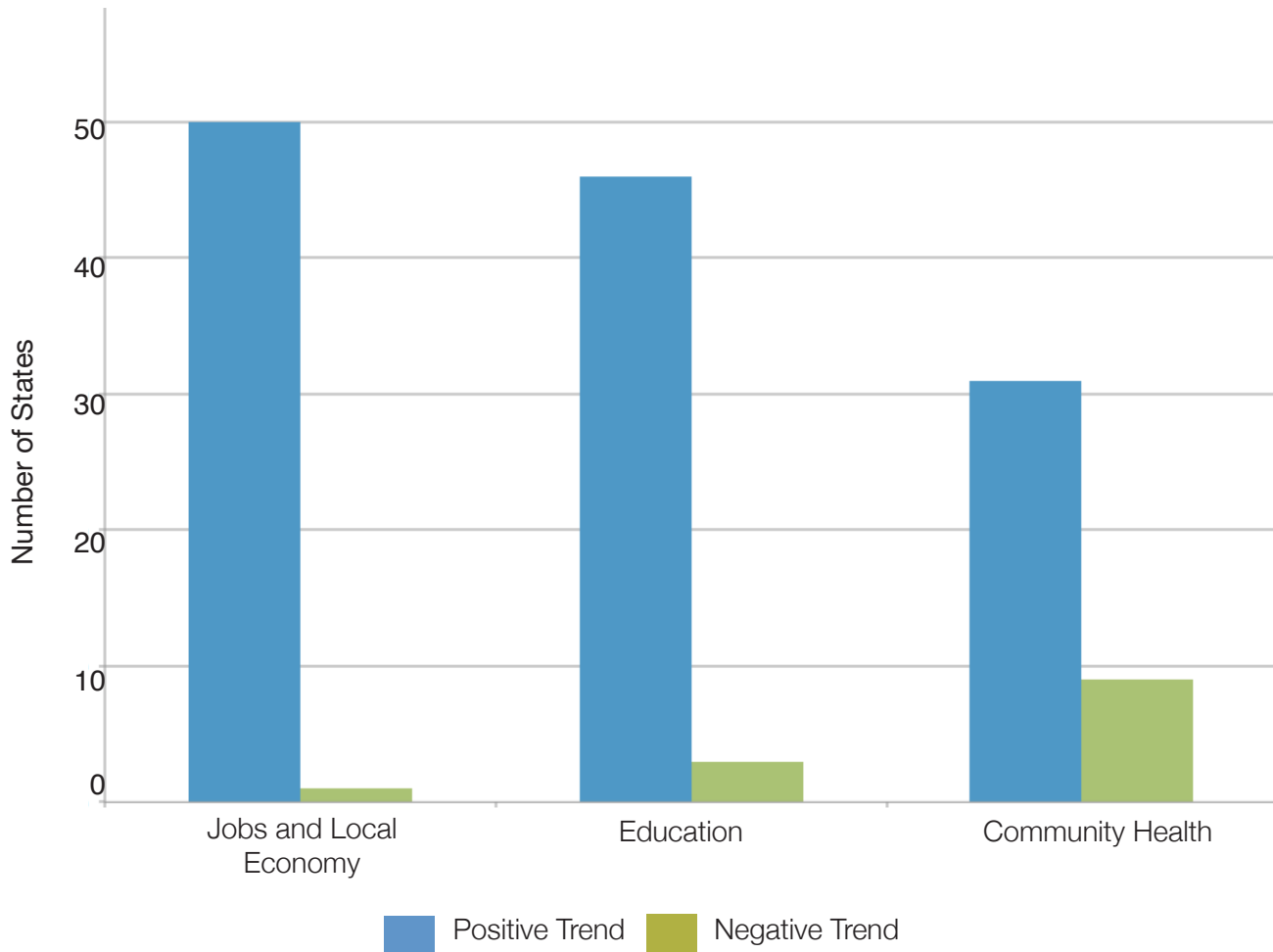
On each of the 16 indicators in the state Opportunity Index, there is a best- and worst-performing state. Vermont leads in two areas: it has the greatest rate of group membership and the lowest rate of violent crime. North Dakota is the best performer in two categories: access to banking services and housing costs. Nebraska has the lowest rate of youth disconnection. The District of Columbia claims the top spot on preschool enrollment, the share of adults with an associate degree or higher, and number of doctors per 100,000 residents, in addition to making the fastest progress in two indicators.

However, District of Columbia also has the highest rate of violent crime and more income inequality than any other state. Utah has the best scores among all states when it comes to rates of volunteering and levels of income inequality, which are measured using the ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that of the 20th percentile. Maryland has the highest median household income, and New Hampshire has the least poverty. Hawaiians have the highest share of households with high-speed Internet access. Iowa does a better job at graduating high school students on time than any other state.

In terms of preschool enrollment, grocery stores, banking institutions and unemployment rates, Nevada is the worst performer. Mississippi also struggles in many areas, coming in last in household income, poverty and Internet access. Louisiana is the lowest performer for volunteer and youth disconnection rates.

These rankings are summarized in the table below, which provides a detailed look at state performance on each indicator in 2015, including information on the most improved state measured by the greatest improvement, on a percentage basis, between 2011 and 2015.

Table 4. Top, Bottom and Most Improved States by Indicator: 2011-2015

Indicator	Top State	Bottom State	Most Improved
Opportunity Index	Vermont	New Mexico	Nevada
Jobs and Local Economy Dimension	North Dakota	Mississippi	Michigan
Education Dimension	New Jersey	Nevada	Nevada
Community Health and Civic Life Dimension	Vermont	Arkansas	Kentucky
Unemployment Rate	Nebraska	Nevada	Michigan
Median Household Income	Maryland	Mississippi	North Dakota
Poverty	New Hampshire	Mississippi	South Dakota
80/20 Ratio	Utah	District of Columbia	South Dakota
Banking Institutions	North Dakota	Nevada	Nebraska
Affordable Housing	North Dakota	California	Nevada
High-Speed Internet	Hawaii, New Hampshire, New Jersey	Mississippi	West Virginia
Preschool	District of Columbia	Nevada	District of Columbia
On-Time High School Graduation	Iowa	District of Columbia	Nevada
Associate degree or Higher	District of Columbia	West Virginia	District of Columbia
Violent Crime	Vermont	District of Columbia	South Carolina
Youth Not in School and Not Working	Nebraska	Louisiana	Maine
Doctors	District of Columbia	Idaho	Wyoming
Grocery Stores and Produce Vendors	New York	Nevada	New York
Group Membership	Vermont	Maine	Nevada
Volunteerism	Utah	Louisiana	Delaware

Some indicators showed more movement since 2011 than others. As the Great Recession's effects continue to fade, we have seen a decline in unemployment almost everywhere. However, income inequality is up in 47 states, pointing to an uneven recovery. High speed Internet is, unsurprisingly, more prevalent in every state, on-time high school graduation is up in the majority of states, and the rate of youth disconnection has dropped, as has the violent crime rate.

Figure 2. Trends in Selected Indicators By State, 2011-2015

Legend: Positive Trend | Negative Trend
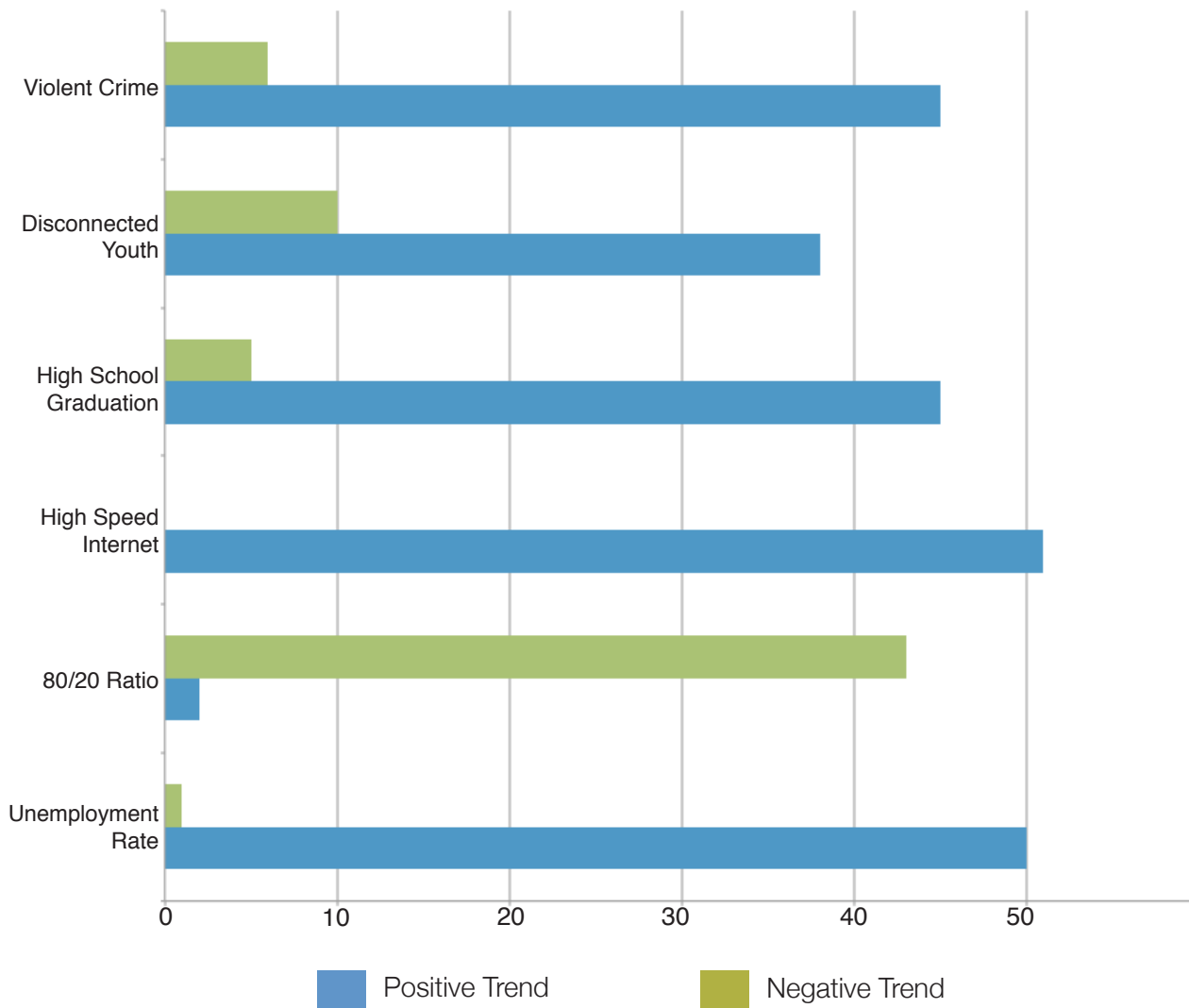
County Opportunity Grades and Changes Since 2011

Figure 3. County Opportunity Grade Trends, 2011-2015

Legend: Positive Change | Negative Change | No Change
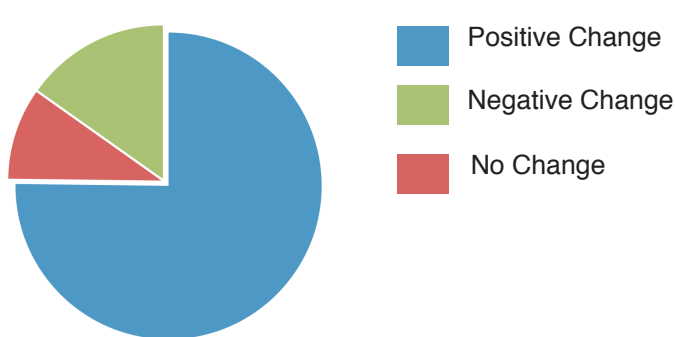
2015 Opportunity Index Grades are provided for 2,673 of the 3,142 U.S. counties or county equivalents. This group of counties is home to 99 percent of Americans. Three-quarters of counties saw their Opportunity Grades increase between 2011 and 2015, and nearly 10 percent remained unchanged over this five-year period. Roughly 15 percent of counties had lower Opportunity Grades in 2015 than in 2011.

The top-graded county in 2015 is Falls Church City, Virginia. Falls Church City was also the top county in 2014. The bottom-graded counties, all of which received F grades, are: Dooly County (Georgia), Apache County (Arizona), Twiggs County (Georgia), and Shannon County (South Dakota). The most improved county from 2011 to 2015 is Fentress County, Tennessee (pop. 17,919); its grade jumped from a D- in 2011 to a C- in 2015. On the other hand, Roosevelt County, Montana (pop. 11,124) experienced the largest drop of any county, with a decline from a C+ to a D+ between 2011 and 2015.

While most counties improved since 2011 on the Jobs and Local Economy and Education dimensions, the majority of counties experienced declines in the Community Health and Civic Life dimension of the Index. The figure below charts the positive, or negative, trend in each of the Index's three dimensions in the last half decade. The vast majority of counties, 75 percent, saw an uptick on the Jobs and Local Economy dimension, whereas just 38 percent of U.S. counties made headway on the Community Health and Civic Life dimension.

Figure 4. Trends in Dimension Scores by County, 2011-2014
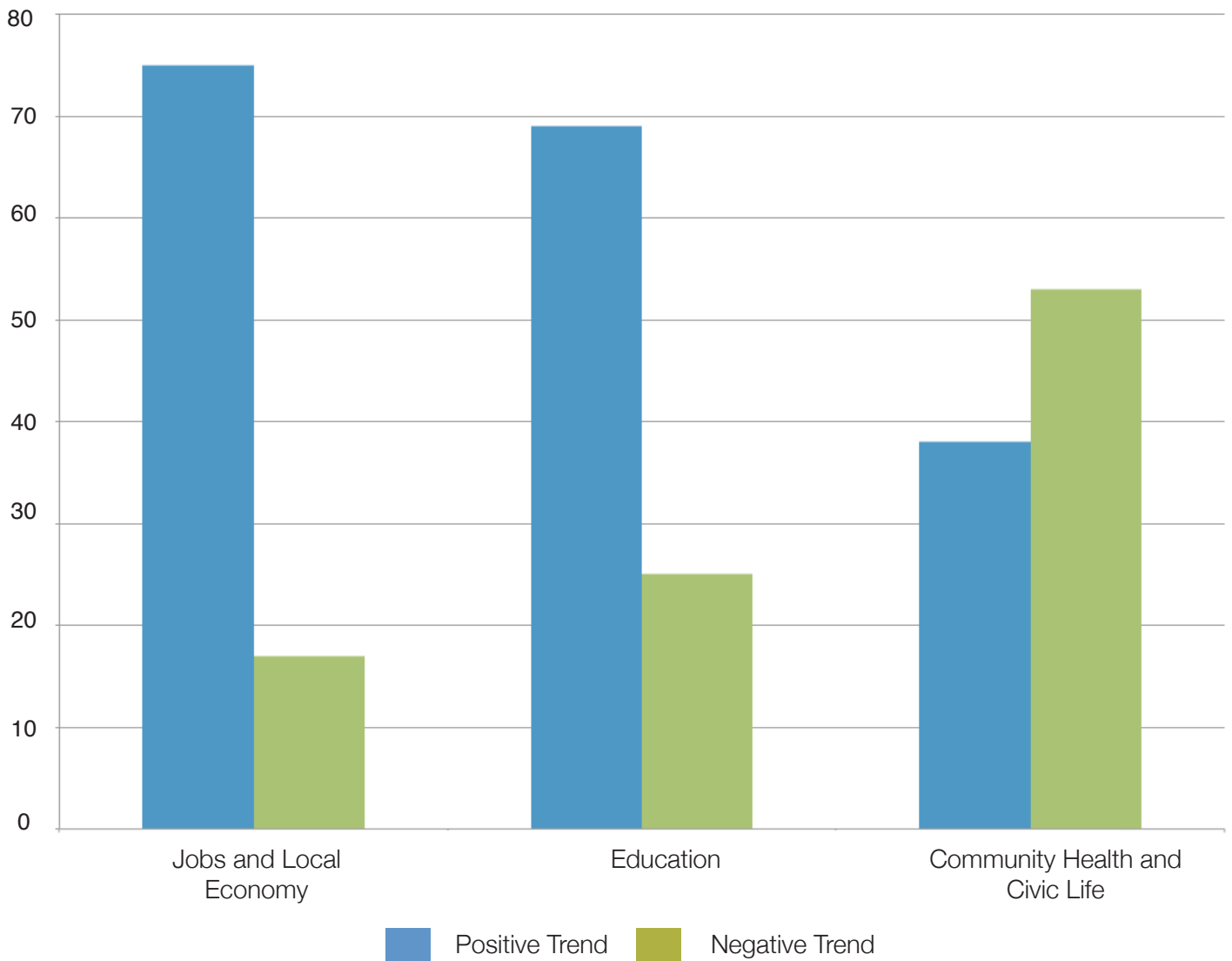
At the county level, Virginia counties dominate in 2015. Falls Church City (pop. 13,469) earns the highest opportunity grade of any county (A+) as well as the highest score on the Education dimension and has the highest percentage of adults with an associate degree or higher. Fairfax County (pop. 1,134,423) has the highest score on the Jobs and Local Economy dimension. Loudoun County (pop. 350,959) has the highest median household income and the lowest poverty rate.

More counties in Texas than in any other state earned most-improved titles. Texas' McMullen County (pop. 772) made tremendous progress in reducing unemployment, with an over 80 percent decline between 2011 and 2014. Cochran County (pop. 2,995) achieved a 48 percent reduction in the poverty rate, and the Zapata County (pop. 14,356) has the most improved performance on the Community Health and Civic Life dimension. The indicators driving this impressive gain for Zapata include a 23 percent decrease in violent crime, a 29 percent increase in the number of medical doctors per 100,000 residents, and another 29 percent increase in the number of grocery stores and produce vendors per 10,000 residents.

Focusing on the counties that receive an F grade for 2015, two of them, Dooly County, Georgia (pop. 14,313), and Shannon County, South Dakota (pop. 14,166) have similar levels of opportunity as measured by the Index, but their performances on specific indicators vary considerably. The Dooly County unemployment rate is nearly 8 percent, lower than the rate in Shannon (over 12 percent). Dooly County graduates a much larger share of high schoolers on time—58 percent—compared to a shockingly low 26 percent in Shannon County.

These trends are summarized below. In the case where multiple counties have the same value, the number of counties is listed.

Table 5. Top, Bottom and Most Improved Counties by Indicator: 2011-2015

Indicator	Top County	Bottom County	Most Improved County
Opportunity Grade	Falls Church City, Virginia	Shannon County, South Dakota	Fentress County, Tennessee
Jobs and Local Economy Dimension	Fairfax County, Virginia	East Carroll Parish, Louisiana	Jefferson County, Mississippi
Education Dimension	Falls Church City, Virginia	Nye County, Nevada	Fentress County, Tennessee
Community Health and Civic Life Dimension	Charlottesville City, Virginia	Red River Parish, Louisiana	Zapata County, Texas
Unemployment Rate	McMullen County, Texas	Wade Hampton Census Area, Alaska	McMullen County, Texas
Median Household Income	Loudoun County, Virginia	Owsley County, Kentucky	Gilmer County, West Virginia
Poverty	Loudoun County, Virginia	Shannon County, South Dakota	Cochran County, Texas
Income Inequality	Morgan County, Utah	Schleicher County, Texas	Guadalupe County, New Mexico

Banking Institutions	Jones County, South Dakota	29 counties without a banking institution	Warren County, Pennsylvania
Affordable Housing	Borden County, Texas	Bronx County, New York	Gilmer County, West Virginia
High-Speed Internet	311 counties	5 counties	4 counties, all in Georgia
Preschool	Dukes County, Massachusetts	5 counties with 0	Mahaska County, Iowa
On-Time High School Graduation	6 counties with 100	Sedgewick County, Colorado	Carroll County, Mississippi
Associate Degree or Higher	Falls Church City, Virginia	Wade Hampton Census Area, Alaska	Pawnee County, Kansas
Violent Crime	Knox County, Nebraska	St. Louis City, Missouri	Menominee County, Wisconsin
Youth Not in School and Not Working	13 counties with 0	Wheeler County, Georgia	Powhatan County, Virginia
Doctors	Montour County, Pennsylvania	175 counties with 0	Newton County, Missouri
Grocery Stores and Produce Vendors	Yakutat City and Borough, Alaska	71 counties with 0	St. Helena Parish, Louisiana

Indicator Correlations

Which parts of the Index are most closely associated with high scores on the Opportunity Index overall? In the case of both the county and state Opportunity Indexes, the three indicators that are most closely associated with the overall 2015 Opportunity Index are: youth not in school and not working; poverty; and the share of adults with an associate degree or higher. There is a strong negative correlation between both youth not in school and not working and poverty and the overall Index, meaning that the higher the rates of youth not in school and not working and the higher the rate of poverty in either a state or county, the lower the Opportunity Index Score or Grade tends to be in that state or county. On the other hand, the higher the proportion of adults in a state or county who have an associate degree, the higher the Opportunity Index Score or Grade tends to be.

What are some associations between various indicators that make up the overall Opportunity Index? At the state level, the rate of youth disconnection is strongly and positively correlated with the state poverty level, suggesting that disconnected youth may disproportionately live in poorer communities.

At the county level, the rate of youth disconnection is strongly and negatively correlated with the percentage of adults with an associate degree or higher. This correlation suggests that disconnected youth tend to be more likely to come from communities where neither parent earned at least an associate degree. The rate of youth disconnection is also strongly correlated with the share of households with high-speed Internet. The relationship between these two indicators is likely due to a third factor behind the relationship: children from less well-off households are more likely to be disconnected and these same households are also less likely to have high-speed Internet.

It's important to note that while the youth disconnection rate dropped from 2011 to 2015, it remains above pre-recession levels. In 2015, 13.8 percent of teens and young adults ages 16 to 24 were "disconnected," compared with 12.9 percent in 2007. Much work remains to be done to help an estimated 5.5 million teens and young adults get on track to meaningful education and career pathways.

Conclusion

Every state in the country had the same or a higher Opportunity Score in 2015 than in 2011, and three in four counties saw their Opportunity Grades improve. The increased scores and grades seen over the past five years were driven primarily by improvements in the Jobs and Local Economy dimension; as the economy recovered from the Great Recession, unemployment fell with positive effects on Index Scores.

These improvements are heartening. But the above analysis shows that more progress is urgently needed on multiple indicators to expand upward mobility more broadly, particularly for low-income youth.

Half a decade of data has consistently shown that the rate of youth disconnection and poverty are the two indicators that correlate most closely with state Opportunity Scores and county Opportunity Grades, so it should serve as a call to action that poverty has increased nationwide by 10.5 percent in the same five years that saw the Dow Jones rise by 63 percent. Income inequality is up in 47 states. The rate of disconnected youth remains significantly above pre-recession levels, and this increasingly well-known problem is drawing attention from leaders such as Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks, and President Obama. Increasing access to opportunity on a dramatic scale requires action across the three dimensions of the Opportunity Index and a sharper national focus on helping low-income teens and young adults embark on meaningful education and career pathways that lead to economic security and stability.

When our youth do well, our communities do well. We all benefit when we are a true opportunity nation.

The Opportunity Index was jointly developed by Opportunity Nation and Measure of America.
For more information, visit www.opportunityindex.org and www.measureofamerica.org

Methodological Notes

The Opportunity Index is designed to provide a snapshot of what opportunity looks like at the state and county levels. The Index focuses on the conditions present in different communities and is designed to help local communities connect economic, academic, civic and other factors that support increased opportunity and economic mobility.

The 2015 Opportunity Index provides Opportunity Scores for all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, and Opportunity Grades for 2,673 counties and county equivalents,[1] comprising 99 percent of the nation's population. These notes provide the methodology for calculating the 2015 Opportunity Index.

Several changes, described below, have been put in place to improve the Opportunity Index since it was first published in November 2011. In order to provide an annual series such that this year's Index can be compared to that of previous years, these change have been applied to the previous Indexes.

The following table summarizes the themes and indicators that make up the 2015 Opportunity Index.

Economy

Jobs	Unemployment Rate (%)
Wages	Median household income
Poverty	Poverty (% of population below poverty line)
Inequality	80/20 ratio (ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that of the 20th percentile)
Access to Banking	Banking institutions (commercial banks, savings institutions and credit unions per 10,000 residents)
Affordable Housing	Households spending less than 30% of household income on housing
Internet Access	High-speed Internet (% of households for states; 5-level categories for counties)

Education

Preschool	Preschool (% ages 3 and 4 in school)
High School Graduation	On-time high school graduation (% of freshman who graduate in four years)
Postsecondary Completion	Associate degree or higher (% of adults 25 and older)

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1 County equivalents refer to several places that use alternate names to describe counties: boroughs and census areas in Alaska, parishes in Louisiana, and cities with county-level status in several states. There are 3,143 counties and county equivalents in the United States. The 2015 Opportunity Index for counties includes 2,673 counties and county-equivalents in the U.S., or 99.2 percent of the U.S. population.

Community

Group Membership	Percentage of adults ages 18 and over involved in social, civic, sports and religious groups (States only)
Volunteerism	Percentage of adults ages 18 and older who did volunteer work any time in the previous year (States Only)
Youth Economic and Academic Inclusion	Young people not in school and not working (% ages 16-24)
Community Safety	Violent crime (per 100,000 population)
Access to Health Care	Doctors (per 100,000 population)
Access to Healthy Food	Grocery stores and produce vendors (per 10,000 population)

Methodology

The Opportunity Index is made up of a set of indicators grouped into three broad dimensions: Jobs and Local Economy; Education; and Community Health and Civic Life. The state Index is made up of 16 indicators; the county Index includes only 14 indicators. This is due to the unavailability of reliable, stable data for two indicators related to civic participation at the county level: group membership and volunteerism. The indicators that make up the Opportunity Index are taken from official national datasets (see sources below).

The methodology for calculating the Opportunity Index requires three steps: normalizing the indicators in order to put them all on a common scale; averaging rescaled scores together within each of the three dimensions of the Index; and averaging the three dimension scores together to calculate the Opportunity Index. All of the indicators in the Opportunity Index are weighted equally, and each of the three dimensions makes up one-third of the final Index value.

Normalizing Indicators

Data for the indicators used in the Opportunity Index come in many different forms, ranging from percentages to ratios, rates or dollar values. In order to include them in a composite index, it is necessary to rescale the data so that they are all expressed in a common form. The Opportunity Index uses a simple rescaling procedure that compares the performance of a state or county on a given indicator to the highest and lowest outcomes observed anywhere on the same indicator. The numerical values of the highest and lowest outcomes have been set to allow for extreme outliers and to anticipate changes in these indicators in the future. The natural log of median household income and the violent crime rate have been used in the process of rescaling these two indicators to normalize the highly skewed distributions of data on these indicators. The rescaling process results in a value that ranges from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the worst possible outcome and 100 represents the best possible outcome.[2]

The general formula for rescaling indicators using this method is given below:

$$\text{Observed Outcome Rescaled} = \left(\frac{\text{Observed Outcome - Lowest Outcome}}{\text{Highest Outcome - Lowest Outcome}} \right) \times 100$$

For some indicators, higher values do not represent positive or desirable outcomes. This is the case with the unemployment rate, poverty rate, the 80/20 ratio, youth not in school and not working, and the violent crime rate. In order to bring these indicators in line with the others, one final rescaling step has been done by sub-

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2 Any rescaled values greater than 1 are capped at 100 and any negative rescaled values are capped at 0.

3 The natural log of median household income, the lowest outcome figure, and the highest outcome figure should all be used in the rescaling equation for this indicator.

$$\text{Observed Outcome Rescaled} = \left\{1 - \left(\frac{\text{Observed Outcome - Lowest Outcome}}{\text{Highest Outcome - Lowest Outcome}}\right)\right\} \times 100$$

tracting the outcome of the rescaling formula from 1 before multiplying by 100, as shown above. The exact lowest and highest outcome values used in the calculation of the Opportunity Index are summarized in the table below.

Economy

THEME	INDICATOR	LOWEST OUTCOME	HIGHEST OUTCOME
Jobs	Unemployment rate	0.0	16.0
Wages	Median household income[3]	$19,000	$95,000
Poverty	Poverty (% of population below poverty line)	2.0	30.0
Inequality	80/20 ratio (ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that of the 20th percentile)	2.0	7.0
Access to Banking	Banking institutions (commercial banks, savings institutions and credit unions per 10,000 residents)	0.0	10.5
Affordable Housing	Households spending less than 30% of household income on housing	40.0	95.0
Internet Access	High-speed Internet (% of households for states; 5-level categories for counties)	1.0	5.0

Education

THEME	INDICATOR	LOWEST OUTCOME	HIGHEST OUTCOME
Preschool	Preschool (% ages 3 and 4 in school)	0.0	100.0
High School Graduation	On-time high school graduation (% of freshman who graduate in four years)	55.0	100.0
Postsecondary Completion	Associate degree or higher (% of adults 25 and older)	0.0	75.0

Community

THEME	INDICATOR	LOWEST OUTCOME	HIGHEST OUTCOME
Group Membership	Percentage of adults ages 18 and over involved in social, civic, sports and religious groups **(States only)**	0.0	70.0
Volunteerism	Percentage of adults ages 18 and older who did volunteer work any time in the previous year **(States Only)**	0.0	65.0
Youth Economic and Academic Inclusion	Young people not in school and not working (% ages 16-24)	0.0	30.0

Community Safety	Violent crime (per 100,000 population)	0.0[4]	12.0[5]
Access to Health Care	Doctors (per 100,000 population)	0.0	600.0
Access to Healthy Food	Grocery stores and produce vendors (per 10,000 population)	0.0	6.25

Calculating Dimension Scores

Once all the indicators are on a scale of 0 to 100 where 100 represents the most desirable possible outcome, scores are calculated for each of the three dimensions of the Index. Scores are the average (arithmetic mean) of the rescaled values for all the indicators in the dimension. For example, the Education Score for a state is the average of rescaled scores for that state on preschool enrollment, on-time high school graduation, and associate degree or higher. The resulting dimension scores also range from 0 to 100.

Calculating the Opportunity Score and Assigning Opportunity Grades

Once dimension scores have been calculated for all three dimensions, the final Opportunity Score for states is the average (arithmetic mean) of the three dimension scores, again expressed as a value between 0 and 100. This is the final Opportunity Score used to rank the 50 states and the District of Columbia on the Opportunity Index.

Because the range of outcomes is generally more extreme for counties than for states, and in order to differentiate between these two different scales (the county Opportunity Index includes only 14 indicators rather than the 16 of the state Index), counties receive a final Opportunity Grade, ranging from A+ to F, while states receive a numerical score from 0 to 100.

Determination of the Opportunity Grade was based on analysis of the distribution of final, raw numerical outcomes of the first, 2011 Opportunity Index for counties and county-equivalents. Counties with similar outcomes were grouped together based on how far their final scores were from the average, measured in standard deviations above or below the mean. These groups were then assigned letter grades ranging from A, for the counties with the very

best overall outcomes, to F, for the counties with the worst outcomes. Raw final sores in the 2011 Opportunity Index revealed that a large number of counties had final outcomes close to the national average and relatively fewer had outcomes that were either very good or very poor. As a result, more counties received final Opportunity Grades of C-, C, or C+ than received Opportunity Grades of B or better or of D or worse. This same method used to assign Opportunity Grades to counties based on their raw final score, has been used to score counties in the subsequent annual Indexes in order to ensure that Opportunity Grades represent a consistent range of achievement over time and that county grades are comparable from one year to the next. Should the general trend observed continue, as most counties make progress on the indicators over time, that progress will be reflected by an increase in counties earning higher grades, and fewer receiving Ds or Fs.

The table of numerical scores and how they relate to county-level Opportunity Grades is summarized below.

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4 Should be used in the rescaling equation with the natural log of the violent crime rate; in other words, these highest and lowest outcome values have already been subjected to a log transformation.

5 See footnote 4 above.

Opportunity Grade	Minimum Numerical Score (rounded)	Maximum Numerical Score (rounded)
A+	75.2	100.0
A	70.8	75.1
A-	66.4	70.7
B+	62.0	66.3
B	57.6	61.9
B-	53.3	57.5
C+	48.9	53.2
C	44.5	48.8
C-	40.1	44.4
D+	35.7	40.0
D	31.3	35.6
D-	26.9	31.2
F	0.0	26.8

Data Notes

All data used to calculate Opportunity Grades for a county should ideally reflect data only for that county. However, in a limited number of cases where county-level data are missing, state-level data are used to fill gaps at the county level in order to avoid having to exclude a large number of counties from the overall Index due to missing data. If a county is missing data for more than two indicators or for two indicators in the same dimension, then a final Opportunity Grade is not calculated for that county. If a county is missing data for two or fewer indicators, neither of which are in the same dimension of the Opportunity Index, then the rescaled average for the state within which that county is located is imputed in place of the missing data point. Out of a total of 3,142 counties and county-equivalents, 469 counties are excluded from the Opportunity Index due to missing or unreliable data.

Most of the indicators used in the Index are estimates based on an analysis of survey data and are, therefore, subject to both sampling and non-sampling error. Where possible, data used to calculate the Opportunity Index were first analyzed in order to remove any extremely unreliable estimates. Different dimension scores and overall Opportunity Scores and Opportunity Grades do not imply that differences between states or between counties or differences within a state or county over time are in every case statistically significant.

Data Definitions and Sources

Jobs and Local Economy Dimension

Indicator: Unemployment Rate (%)
Definition: The total number of people who do not have jobs but who have actively looked for work within the preceding four weeks and are available to work as a percentage of the total number of people in the labor force.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics tables and news releases (http://www.bls.gov/lau/).
Note: Unemployment rates in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for April 2015. Data are provisional and not seasonally adjusted.

Indicator: Median Household Income (2010 $)
Definition: The income of the household exactly in the middle of the distribution of households by income, ranked from wealthiest to poorest. Household income includes earnings from work and other income from interest, dividends, Social Security, pension payments, unemployment compensation, and other regularly received forms of money for all members of the household.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).
Note: Because income is not distributed equally across individuals or households, the average (mean) household income is much higher than the median. Median household income in 2011 for the United States is about $51,000 whereas average household income is about $71,000. Median household income data in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2009-2013 for counties. All median household income figures in the Opportunity Index are expressed in inflation-adjusted 2010 dollars.

Indicator: Poverty (% of population below poverty line)
Definition: Percentage of people of all ages living on incomes below the federal poverty line.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).
Note: Poverty rate data in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2009-2013 for counties.

Indicator: 80/20 Ratio (ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to that of the 20th percentile)
Definition: The 80/20 ratio describes the disparity in the size of the income of the household at the 80th percentile relative to that of the income of the household at the 20th percentile. The 80/20 ratio for the United States in is 5, meaning that the income of the household at the 80th percentile is 5 times that of the household at the 20th percentile.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).
Note: 80/20 Ratio data in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2009-2013 for counties.

Indicator: Banking Institutions (commercial banks, savings institutions, and credit unions per 10,000 residents)
Definition: Total number of commercial banks, credit unions, and savings institutions (NAICS 522110, 522120, and 522130) per 10,000 residents.
Source: Measure of America analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns and Population Estimates Program (http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html and http://www.census.gov/popest/).
Note: Data on this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013.

Indicator: Households Spending Less than 30% of Household Income on Housing Costs (%)
Definition: The percentage of households spending less than 30% of their household income on rent and

utilities for households who rent or on mortgage payments and other housing costs for those who own their homes.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).

Note: Thirty percent of household income going to housing costs is a widely accepted cut-off for housing affordability. This figure excludes housing units for which housing costs and/or household income could not be determined. Data on this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2009–2013 for counties.

Indicator: High-Speed Internet (% of households for states; 5-level categories for counties)

Definition: Ratio of the number of residential fixed Internet connections with a speed of at least 200 kbps in at least one direction to the total estimated number of households in that geographic area.

Source: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Internet Access Services (http://transition.fcc.gov/wcb/iatd/comp.html).

Note: The state and county scales are different for this indicator due to confidentiality concerns. The FCC does not make the ratio of residential fixed connections to total households available at the county-level but rather provides ranges of the number of fixed residential connections per 1,000 households. Thus the county-level score for this indicator falls on a scale of one to five, with five representing the most comprehensive Internet coverage. The categories are as follows:

Category	Range of number of households per 1,000 with a high-speed internet connection in their homes in each category
1	Greater than 0 and as many as 200 households per 1,000
2	Greater than 200 and as many as 400 households per 1,000
3	Greater than 400 and as many as 600 households per 1,000
4	Greater than 600 and as many as 800 households per 1,000
5	Greater than 800 households per 1,000

The actual ratio is available for the nation as a whole and for all states. All data on this indicator for the 2014 Opportunity Index are from the FCC and correspond to June 30, 2013.

Education Dimension

Indicator: Preschool (% ages 3 and 4 in school)
Definition: The percentage of children ages 3 and 4 enrolled in public or private nursery school, preschool, or kindergarten.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).
Note: Data on preschool enrollment in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2011-2013 for states and 2009-2013 for counties.

Indicator: On-Time High School Graduation (% of freshmen who graduate in four years)
Definition: The percentage of high school freshmen that graduate after four years of high school.
Source: State and county data are from the U.S. Department of Education: EDFacts Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) for the 2012-13 school year.
Note: State and county data for this indicator come from the ACGR. EdFacts defines this measure as "the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. From the beginning of 9th grade (or the earliest high school grade), students who are entering that grade for the first time form a cohort that is "adjusted" by adding any students who subsequently transfer into the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to another country, or die." Please note that Idaho did not report a 2012-13 ACGR at the state level. In this instance we used the 2012 Average Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) contained in the 2014 Opportunity Index.

In previous years, the Opportunity Index used the Average Freshmen Graduation Rate (AFGR) from the U.S. Department of Education, Nation Center for Education Statistics, Public High School Four-Year On- Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates. County data were from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings analysis of data from the National Center for Education Statistics and Departments of Education of various states.

Indicator: Associate Degree or Higher (% of adults 25 and older)
Definition: The percentage of adults ages 25 and older who have completed an associate degree or higher.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml).
Note: Data on this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2009-2013 for counties.

Community Health and Civic Life Dimension

Indicator: Group Membership (% of adults 18 and older involved in social, civic, sports and religious groups)
Definition: The percentage of adults 18 and over who report being members of social, civic, service, recreational or religious groups in the previous year.
Source: Measure of America analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, DataFerrett, Current Population Survey, Civic Engagement Supplement. Due to limitations of the survey data, this indicator is only calculated at the state level.
Note: Membership in a religious group includes those actively involved in activities in their place of worship and does not include those who attend religious services only. Two years worth of survey responses were pooled to increase the sample size available for analysis. This pooling makes estimates of the percentage of the adult population who are members of groups more stable. As a result of the discontinuation of the Civic Engagement Supplement of the Current Population Survey, data for this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are from 2011 and 2013. This survey was not conducted in 2012.

Indicator: Volunteerism (% of adults ages 18 and older)
Definition: The percentage of adults 18 and older who did volunteer work through or for an organization at any time in the previous year.
Source: Measure of America analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, DataFerrett, Current Population Survey, Volunteering Supplement. Due to limitations of the survey data, this indicator is only calculated at the state level.
Note: Two years-worth of survey responses were pooled to increase the sample size available for analysis. This helps make estimates of the percentage of the adult population that engage in volunteer activities more stable. Data for this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013-2014.

Indicator: Youth Not in School and Not Working (% ages 16-24)
Definition: The percentage of the population ages 16 to 24 who are not enrolled in school and not working.
Source: Measure of America analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey PUMS Microdata (http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml) and custom tabulations for county and county equivalents provided by special arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau.
Note: Data on this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2009-2013 for counties.

Indicator: Violent Crime (per 100,000 population)
Definition: Total number of violent crimes per 100,000 people. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery, and assault.
Source: State data from the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics (www.ucrdatatool.gov); county data from the County Health Rankings analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal Justice Information Services. County Health Rankings are from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
Note: Data for this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013 for states and 2010-2012 for counties.

Indicator: Doctors (per 100,000 population)
Definition: The number of active, non-federal medical doctors per 100,000 residents.
Source: Measure of America calculations using medical workforce data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Area Health Resources Files and population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (http://www.census.gov/popest/).
Note: Data on this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013.

Indicator: Grocery Stores and Produce Vendors (per 10,000 population)
Definition: The rate of supermarkets, grocery stores, and produce stands (NAICS codes 445110 and 445230) per 10,000 residents.

Source: Measure of America analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns and Population Estimates Program (http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/index.html and http://www.census.gov/popest/).

Note: Data on this indicator in the 2011 Opportunity Index are for 2009; data in the 2012 Opportunity Index are for 2010; data in the 2013 Opportunity Index are for 2011; data in the 2014 Opportunity Index are for 2012; data in the 2015 Opportunity Index are for 2013.

Population Estimates
Definition: Estimate of the mid-year (July 1st) resident population of each state and county in 2012.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (http://www.census.gov/popest/)
Note: Data on this indicator in the 2015 Opportunity Index are 2014 vintage population estimates for 2012.

Changes to the Opportunity Index Since 2014

The 2015 Opportunity Index includes modifications to one indicator:

On-Time High School Graduation (% of freshmen who graduate in four years). In previous years, the Opportunity Index has used an indicator that is technically called Average Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) for on-time high school graduation. Over the past few years, there has been a shift away from collection of the AFGR by states towards a new indicator for on-time high school graduation called the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR). While both indicators are about the percentage of freshmen who graduate high school in four years, the ACGR is thought to be a more precise indicator because it accounts for the transfer of high school students into and out of the school during the year.

As a result, the Department of Education has not updated AFGR since 2012 and so it is impossible to continue to use this indicator. It is widely accepted that the ACGR will be replacing the AFGR. Measure of America studied the difference between the AFGR and the ACGR at the national level and found a 1 percentage point difference between these two indicators. There is more variation when you drill-down to the state and county level. For example, in 2012, the District of Columbia's AFGR was 71 percent compared with a 2012 ACGR of 59 percent. Detailed comparisons and a full explanation of the two measurements can be found in this report "Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic. Annual Update 2015." Please note that Idaho did not report a 2012-13 ACGR at the state level. In this instance we used the 2012 AFGR from the 2014 Opportunity Index.

Although both the AFGR and ACGR estimate on-time high school graduation rates, they use different methodologies. This technically means that the 2015 Opportunity Index is not strictly comparable to that of earlier years. But given the difference in this one indicator is relatively small, and it comprises only one of 16 (for states) or 14 (for counties) indicators that make up the Index, overall Index comparisons can be made but must be made with caution. Comparisons on this one indicator from 2015 to earlier years should also be made with caution.

References

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About The Opportunity Index:
The Opportunity Index is an annual composite measure at the state and county levels of 16 economic, educational and civic factors that expand or restrict upward mobility. The Opportunity Index ranks all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and grades more than 2,600 counties A-F, and is designed to help identify concrete solutions that expand opportunity to more Americans. The Index was jointly developed by Opportunity Nation and Measure of America.

About Opportunity Nation:
Opportunity Nation is a bipartisan, national coalition of more than 350 businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions and community leaders working to expand economic opportunity. Opportunity Nation seeks to close the opportunity gap by amplifying the work of its coalition members, advocating policy and private sector actions, and releasing the annual Opportunity Index. Visit OpportunityNation.org.

About Measure of America:
Measure of a America, a Project of the Social Science Research Council, provides easy-to-use yet methodologically sound tools for understanding well-being, opportunity, and inequality in America and for stimulating fact-based conversations about issues we all care about: health, education and living standards. Visit MeasureofAmerica.org.

Visit www.opportunityindex.org to explore the complete dataset.