

Social Indicators

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Many traditional economic indicators summarize the economy in aggregate. Social indicators provide insights into how well overall economic indicators align with quality of life, including context on how broadly market and government systems distribute Utah's prosperity among members of society.

Chapter Summary

Utah fares comparatively well overall on many social indicators. Compared to other states and DC, Utah's ranks among the lowest in both the traditional poverty measure (50th) and a newer supplemental poverty measure (46th), in share of the population in poor or fair physical health (42nd), and in the violent crime rate (36th of 45 reporting). Utah ranks among the highest in median household income (10th), median home price (7th), and bachelor's degree attainment (14th).

Utah ranks low nationally on a key mental health measure (11th). Moreover, Utah Foundation quality of life indices suggest Utahns express concern about life quality issues such as housing, income, and mental health.

Year in Review

Poverty

Poverty measures provide insights as to the share of the population with insufficient resources to meet basic needs. Using the traditional poverty measure, Utah ties for the lowest poverty rate in the nation, with an estimated 7.1% of Utahns (roughly 240,000 people) in poverty. Developed in the 1960s, the official poverty rate measures poverty using a threshold of financial resources below three times a minimum food diet, adjusted for price changes since 1963.

Beginning in 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau began publishing a supplemental poverty measure. This more comprehensive measure accounts for spending beyond food (such as for clothes, shelter, health care, taxes, and utilities) and adjusts for benefits from non-cash government assistance, such as housing subsidies, utility assistance, and food assistance. Using this supplemental measure, Utah ranks 46th, with a 5.7% poverty rate.

Educational Attainment

Education beyond high school increases economic opportunity and social mobility. For society at large, education bolsters the middle class and decreases economic stratification. The share of Utahns 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or higher stands at 37.9%. Utah ranks in the top third of states (14th) for four-year degree attainment. Among Mountain States, only Colorado outperforms Utah.

Post-secondary education also includes high-quality certificates and certifications. The share of Utahns with a certificate as their highest educational attainment level increased from 6.0% to 9.2% in the past five years.¹ Similarly, the share of Utahns with certifications as their highest educational attainment level increased from 4.3% to 4.6% over the same period. The latest data show Utah's post-high school attainment rate at 61.1%, well above the 53.7% national average.

¹ Lumina Foundation, Stronger Nation.

Violent Crime

Violent crime in Utah trended upward during the 2010s, from a low of 1.97 violent crimes per 1,000 people in 2011 to 2.47 in 2022 (down from 2.77 in 2021). Violent crime rates in Utah are lower than the national average (3.81 per 1,000 people). In 2022, Utah had the 10th lowest violent crime rate in the nation. Violent crime rates differ significantly among Mountain States. While Idaho and Utah experience the lowest violent crime rates, rates in the other five Mountain states exceed the national average.

Quality of Life Indices

The Utah Foundation regularly updates its Community and Personal Quality of Life indices. Utahns' perception of *Community* Quality of Life Index declined from 2013 to 2022 (Index score decrease from 73 to 64). Utah's *Personal* Quality of Life Index declined between 2018 and 2022 (Index score decrease from 82 to 76). Several factors drive this Index decrease, including concerns about housing, income, and physical and mental health.

Housing

Two of twenty Index factors (housing affordability and rising inflation) contributed to the decrease. One way to measure affordability is to consider homeowners' housing value perceptions.² Since 2010, Americans' perceived median home values increased from about \$180,000 to about \$320,000 (77%), while perceived Utah values increased from about \$220,000 to \$500,000 (129%). Higher mortgage interest rates continue to impact first-time homebuyers as well as lower-income earners affected by rent increases.

Income

When asked what could most improve their personal life quality, one-quarter responded with more income. Utah's median household income totaled \$89,168, 10th highest in the nation. That said, median household income falls much lower for certain segments of Utah's population (for example, \$73,413 for Hispanic/Latino households).

Physical and Mental Health

Utah ranks well on most physical health measures. Fifteen percent of Index survey respondents note improving physical health, such as "getting back to daily walks" and "exercising more, going to bed earlier" as a need. In general, about 14.2% of Utah adults report that they are in poor health, compared to 14.5% nationally.

Along with physical health, reported spiritual peace and happiness declined in the quality of life indices. On average, Americans report 4.5 poor mental health days in the preceding month, while Utahns report 4.7 days (11th worst in the nation). U.S. and Utah men report 3.8 poor mental health days, while U.S. women report 5.2 days and Utah women 5.5 days.

Utah also ranks higher on a survey that asks Americans if they experienced seven or more days of poor mental health in the previous month. These data show an 8.5 percentage point increase in the share of adults experiencing seven or more days of poor mental health compared to 10 years ago.

2024 Outlook

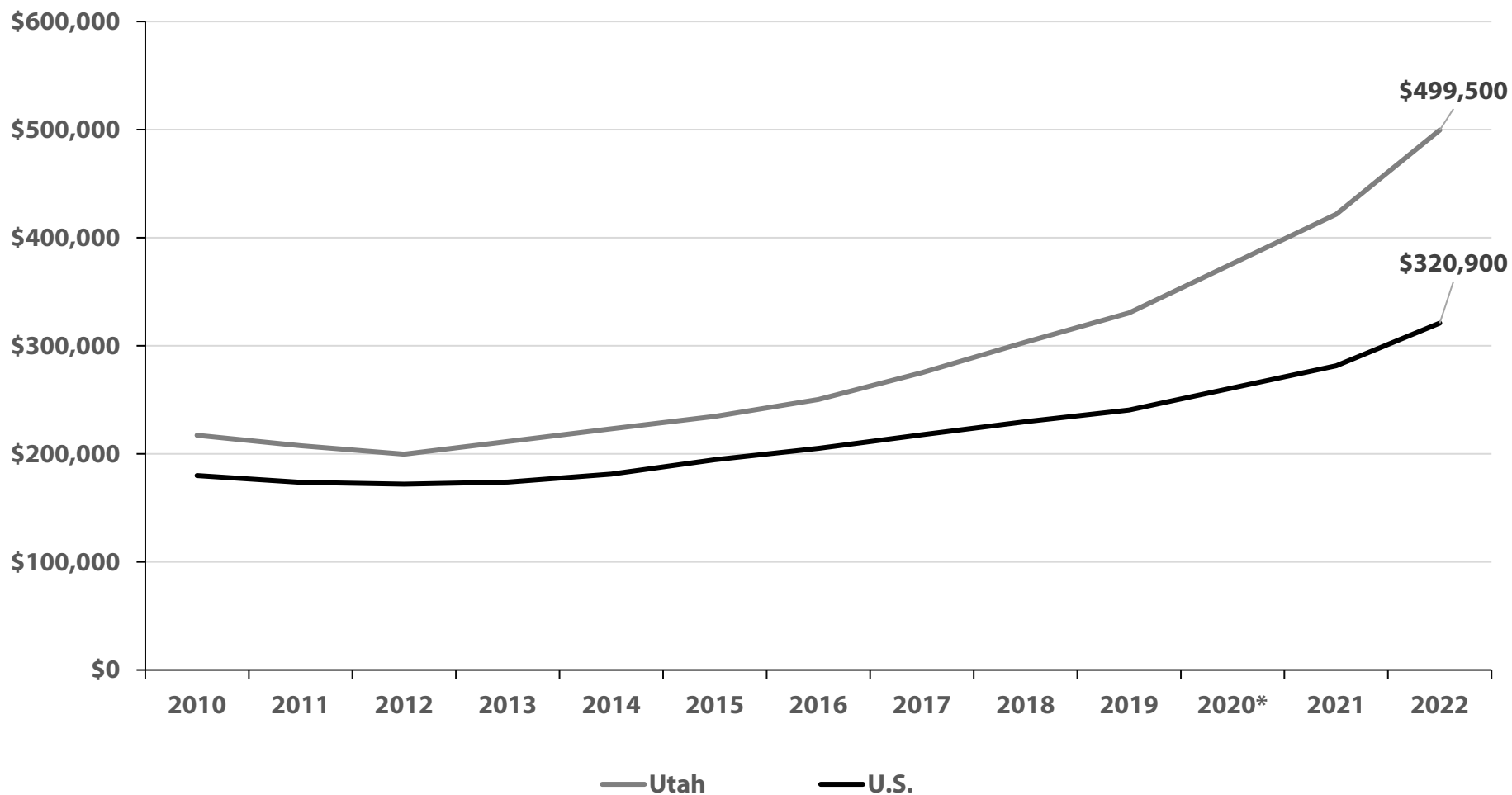
Utah's generally positive social indicators, such low poverty and violent crimes rates and higher-than-average household incomes and educational attainment, bode well for the state moving forward.

That said, metrics of ongoing concern include mental health and housing. Many Utahns increasingly express concern about quality of life. Whether inflation or other factors primarily drive this sentiment will become more apparent if inflationary pressures ease as projected.

Other chapters in this report also explore certain social indicators in more depth, such as public and higher education, health care, and housing.

² "How much do you think this house... would sell for it if were for sale."

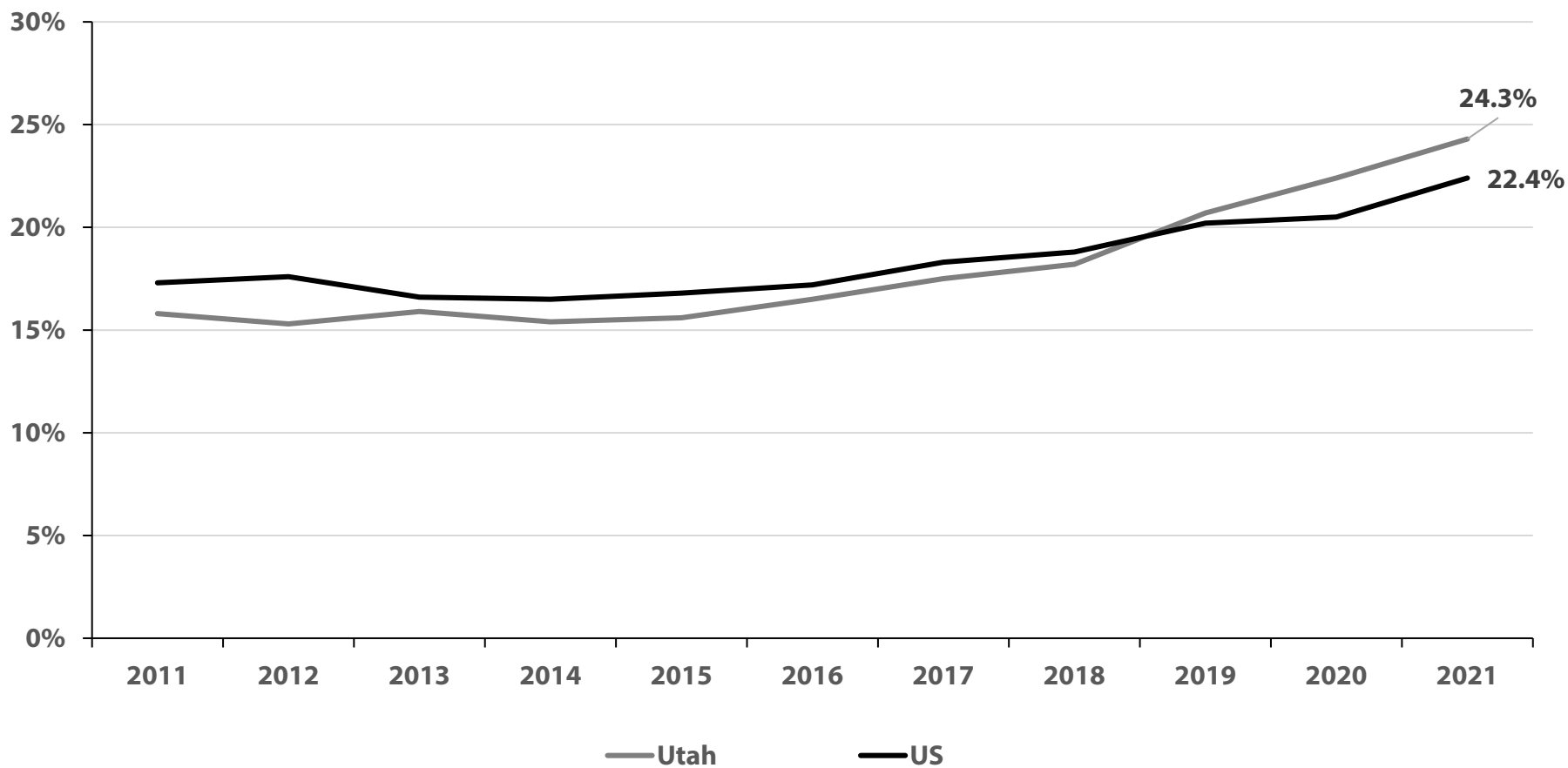
Perceived Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Housing in Utah and the U.S., 2010-2022



* Data unavailable for 2020.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year sample

Seven or More Days of Poor Mental Health in the Past 30 Days in Utah and the U.S., 2011-2021



Measures of Social Capital and Quality of Life, 2022

	Percent of Population with Educational Attainment Beyond a Bachelors Degree (ages 25+)		Rank Relative to Other States	Violent Crime Rate per 100,000 Inhabitants	Rank Relative to Other States	Median Owner Occupied Home Value	Rank Relative to Other States	Median Household Income	Rank Relative to Other States	Percent of Adult Population in Fair to Poor Physical Health (Age Adjusted)	Rank Relative to Other States	Average Number of Poor Mental Health Days per Month	Rank Relative to Other States	Average Number of Poor Mental Health Days per Month (men)	Average Number of Poor Mental Health Days per Month (women)	Percent of People in Poverty (Official Poverty Measure)		Percent of People in Poverty (Supplemental Poverty Measure)		Rank Relative to Other States
	3-Year Average (2020-2022)	Rank Relative to Other States													3-Year Average (2020-2022)	Rank Relative to Other States	3-Year Average (2020-2022)	Rank Relative to Other States		
U.S. Average	35.7%			380.7		\$320,900		\$74,775		14.5%		4.5		3.8		5.2	11.5%		9.8%	
Alabama	28.8%	44	443.7	13	\$200,900	45	\$59,674	45	21.7%	4	4.9	8	4.1	5.5	14.8%	8	10.9%	7		
Alaska	30.6%	40	NA	NA	\$336,900	22	\$88,121	12	15.5%	30	4.3	27	3.4	5.2	11.5%	19	9.7%	18		
Arizona	33.0%	30	NA	NA	\$402,800	12	\$74,568	20	18.5%	12	4.6	16	3.8	5.3	12.1%	17	9.3%	21		
Arkansas	25.4%	49	648.0	3	\$179,800	49	\$55,432	48	22.5%	3	5.1	4	4.5	5.7	15.9%	4	10.5%	10		
California	37.0%	16	531.3	6	\$715,900	2	\$91,551	6	17.8%	14	4.7	11	4.1	5.3	11.4%	22	13.2%	2		
Colorado	45.9%	3	503.6	8	\$531,100	6	\$89,302	9	13.7%	44	4.5	19	3.9	5.1	8.5%	42	8.9%	24		
Connecticut	41.9%	8	152.8	43	\$347,200	20	\$88,429	11	13.9%	43	4	41	3.4	4.5	9.8%	29	9.2%	22		
Delaware	36.5%	17	390.9	20	\$337,200	21	\$82,174	15	15.9%	29	3.9	46	3.2	4.5	10.5%	27	8.1%	30		
District of Columbia	65.4%	1	823.6	1	\$711,100	3	\$101,027	1	12.0%	51	4.2	35	3.6	4.6	14.7%	9	14.8%	1		
Florida	34.3%	27	370.3	23	\$354,100	19	\$69,303	34	16.0%	28	4.2	35	3.5	4.8	13.1%	13	12.7%	3		
Georgia	34.7%	24	456.1	12	\$297,400	25	\$72,837	22	17.8%	14	4.4	24	3.8	5	13.0%	14	10.1%	14		
Hawaii	35.4%	22	NA	NA	\$820,100	1	\$92,458	5	13.1%	49	3.6	50	3.2	4	10.2%	28	10.0%	16		
Idaho	32.3%	32	246.6	37	\$432,500	10	\$72,785	23	15.2%	35	4.3	27	3.6	5.1	8.9%	36	5.7%	46		
Illinois	37.7%	15	300.0	31	\$251,600	33	\$76,708	18	16.1%	25	4.3	27	3.6	4.9	9.4%	33	7.9%	32		
Indiana	29.6%	42	322.9	27	\$208,700	42	\$66,785	39	18.5%	12	4.7	11	3.8	5.6	10.9%	24	7.3%	37		
Iowa	32.3%	32	272.2	34	\$194,600	47	\$69,588	32	15.4%	33	4	41	3	4.9	9.4%	33	5.9%	43		
Kansas	35.6%	21	416.9	17	\$206,600	43	\$68,925	35	15.5%	30	4.3	27	3.4	5.1	9.0%	35	7.1%	40		
Kentucky	27.9%	46	231.3	39	\$196,300	46	\$59,341	47	20.3%	7	4.7	11	4.1	5.2	15.8%	5	10.8%	9		
Louisiana	27.1%	47	570.9	5	\$209,200	41	\$55,416	49	20.6%	5	5.5	2	4.3	6.4	16.9%	3	10.9%	7		
Maine	36.1%	19	104.4	45	\$290,600	27	\$69,543	33	14.5%	36	4.3	27	3.8	4.8	8.9%	36	4.6%	51		
Maryland	43.8%	5	415.6	18	\$398,100	14	\$94,991	3	14.5%	36	4	41	3.2	4.8	8.6%	40	9.7%	18		
Massachusetts	46.6%	2	327.2	26	\$534,700	5	\$94,488	4	13.1%	49	4.3	27	3.5	5	8.5%	42	8.3%	28		
Michigan	32.1%	35	468.4	11	\$224,400	39	\$66,986	38	16.3%	22	4.5	19	3.7	5.2	11.7%	18	8.0%	31		
Minnesota	39.1%	13	284.0	33	\$314,600	23	\$82,338	14	13.5%	46	3.9	46	3.2	4.6	7.7%	49	5.5%	49		
Mississippi	24.8%	50	249.6	35	\$162,500	50	\$52,719	51	23.0%	1	4.5	19	3.9	5	17.8%	2	12.5%	4		
Missouri	32.2%	34	502.6	9	\$221,200	40	\$64,811	42	17.4%	18	4.8	9	3.7	5.9	11.5%	19	8.4%	26		
Montana	34.6%	26	429.1	15	\$366,400	17	\$67,631	36	16.3%	22	4.4	24	3.7	5.1	10.7%	26	8.5%	25		
Nebraska	34.7%	24	NA	NA	\$232,400	38	\$69,597	31	14.5%	36	3.7	48	2.8	4.5	8.1%	47	5.9%	43		
Nevada	27.0%	48	485.3	10	\$434,700	9	\$72,333	24	20.5%	6	4.7	11	4	5.4	12.6%	15	10.5%	10		
New Hampshire	41.3%	9	127.1	44	\$384,700	15	\$89,992	8	14.5%	36	4.1	37	3.6	4.6	7.1%	50	6.2%	42		
New Jersey	43.5%	6	227.2	40	\$428,900	11	\$96,346	2	14.5%	36	4	41	3.5	4.6	8.2%	46	9.0%	23		
New Mexico	30.5%	41	790.3	2	\$243,100	36	\$59,726	44	18.7%	11	4.6	16	4.2	5	18.2%	1	10.2%	13		
New York	40.0%	10	NA	NA	\$400,400	13	\$79,557	17	16.1%	25	4.4	24	3.8	4.9	12.4%	16	11.9%	5		
North Carolina	35.9%	20	409.5	19	\$280,600	29	\$67,481	37	17.5%	17	4.3	27	3.4	5.1	13.3%	11	10.3%	12		
North Dakota	31.8%	37	311.5	29	\$243,100	36	\$71,970	26	13.6%	45	3.7	48	2.9	4.5	9.6%	31	6.7%	41		
Ohio	32.0%	36	313.1	28	\$204,100	44	\$65,720	40	17.8%	14	5	7	4.3	5.6	11.5%	19	7.3%	37		
Oklahoma	28.5%	45	424.5	16	\$191,700	48	\$59,673	46	20.0%	8	5.1	4	4.3	5.9	15.8%	5	9.9%	17		
Oregon	36.3%	18	349.9	24	\$475,600	8	\$75,657	19	17.1%	19	5.1	4	4.3	5.8	9.5%	32	7.4%	36		
Pennsylvania	35.1%	23	336.1	25	\$245,500	34	\$71,798	27	16.9%	20	4.5	19	3.6	5.3	10.8%	25	7.7%	34		
Rhode Island	39.6%	11	173.0	42	\$383,900	16	\$81,854	16	16.4%	21	4	41	3.4	4.5	8.8%	38	5.7%	46		
South Carolina	32.6%	31	508.2	7	\$254,600	31	\$64,115	43	16.2%	24	4.1	37	3.6	4.6	13.3%	11	9.5%	20		
South Dakota	31.6%	38	384.0	22	\$245,000	35	\$69,728	30	14.5%	36	3.4	51	3.2	3.7	9.7%	30	5.8%	45		
Tennessee	31.1%	39	625.2	4	\$284,800	28	\$65,254	41	19.1%	10	5.4	3	4.1	6.5	11.4%	22	8.3%	28		
Texas	33.9%	28	438.0	14	\$275,400	30	\$72,284	25	19.7%	9	4.8	9	3.8	5.8	13.7%	10	11.3%	6		
Utah	37.9%	14	246.9	36	\$499,500	7	\$89,168	10	14.2%	42	4.7	11	3.8	5.5	7.1%	50	5.7%	46		
Vermont	44.2%	4	222.9	41	\$304,700	24	\$73,991	21	13.2%	48	4.1	37	3.4	4.9	8.4%	44	7.6%	35		
Virginia	42.2%	7	240.6	38	\$365,700	18	\$85,873	13	16.1%	25	4.6	16	3.6	5.3	8.6%	40	8.4%	26		
Washington	39.5%	12	384.2	21	\$569,500	4	\$91,306	7	15.4%	33	4.5	19	3.7	5.3	8.3%	45	7.9%	32		
West Virginia	24.8%	50	293.6	32	\$155,100	51	\$54,329	50	22.7%	2	5.9	1	4.7	6.8	15.6%	7	10.1%	14		
Wisconsin	33.2%	29	305.0	30	\$252,800	32	\$70,996	28	15.5%	30	4.3	27	3.5	5	8.0%	48	5.1%	50		
Wyoming	29.6%	42	NA	NA	\$292,300	26	\$70,042	29	13.3%	47	4.1	37	3.2	5	8.7%	39	7.2%	39		

Sources: Educational Attainment: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year samples.
 Crime: FBI, Uniform Crime Reporting Program, Crime Data Reporter, National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Tables.
 Housing: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year samples.
 Income: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year samples.
 Mental Health: Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) analysis of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2013-2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).
 Physical Health: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data.
 Poverty: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2021 to 2023 Annual Social and Economic Supplements (CPS ASEC).