



## Economic Stability, Prosperity, & Health

A clearly established relationship exists between [poverty](#), [socioeconomic status](#), and [health outcomes](#). Living in poverty can lead to disease and early death. Among the risk factors are

- Whether you live in a rural or urban area,
- Whether you are a person who is a member of a racial or ethnic minority,
- Whether your family received welfare assistance when you were growing up.



[Healthy People 2030](#) has the following objectives related to increasing economic stability:

- Reduce the proportion of adolescents and young adults who aren't in school or working.
- Reduce the proportion of people living in poverty.
- Increase employment in working-age people.
- Increase the proportion of children living with at least 1 parent who works full time.



## New US Census Bureau Data for Economic Stability

In the report, [Understanding Equity through Census Bureau Data](#), the US Census Bureau highlights new income, poverty, and health insurance statistics. For instance, the Census Bureau Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) includes the impact of programs like Social Security and nutrition assistance. SPM found the poverty rate in 2020 was higher for the

Black (14.6%) and Hispanic (12.0%) populations than for the White (8.1%) and Asian (8.8%) populations.

The Census Bureau also uses wealth as an indicator of economic well-being, the capacity to endure financial hardships, and equity. Net worth of a household with a Black householder was \$9,567 compared with a non-Hispanic White householder was \$171,700. Households with one or more members with a disability had a net worth of \$84,020 compared to \$117,300 for households with no members with a disability.

Homeownership plays a major role in building wealth and financial stability. Again, the contrasts are significant. For White households, the rate is 74.2%, for Black alone households, 44.6%; for Hispanic households, 47.5%; and for other households, 56.2%

### [New Census Tool Provides Easy Access to Child Poverty Rates in Every US School District](#)

What is your local school district's child poverty estimate? How does it compare to child poverty rates in nearby populations and those of similar size? The US Census Bureau recently released a new data visualization tool that includes school districts from small rural districts to large metropolitan districts that helps answer key questions that are important in the allocation of federal funds.

## Measuring Prosperity: Beyond Dollars and Cents



The Legatum Institute, a British think tank, has taken an expanded view of economic stability. Its Prosperity Index assesses three equally weighted domains—inclusive societies, open economies, and empowered people—areas tapping the richness in life beyond dollars and cents. The Index provides county and state data over a 10-year period, making it possible to see whether prosperity and its underpinnings have improved or deteriorated and what specifically is driving that change. For the [2021 United States Prosperity Index](#), the Institute selected 1,196 counties in 12 states for in-depth analysis; Iowa was one them.

According to the [Iowa County Report](#), Iowa's strongest prosperity counties in 2021 are Bremer (1), Sioux (2), Story (3), Dallas (4), and Winneshiek (5). The weakest counties include Webster (95), Lee (96), Des Moines (97), Pottawattamie (98), and Wapello (99). Harrison (44) is the most improved county since 2011.

[Performance for all Iowa Counties](#). Interactive [maps](#), [rankings](#), and downloadable [profiles](#) for Iowa and each county are provided.

## Initiatives to Address Economic Stability

**Proposed Policy Initiatives.** In [Health, Income, & Poverty: Where We Are & What Could Help](#) for *Health Affairs*, researchers Dhruv Khullar and Dave A. Choksi acknowledge the difficulty of isolating the contribution of income to health because income intersects with

many risk factors. At the same time, Khyllar and Choksi propose some policy levers to reduce income-related health disparities. They include childhood programs, housing mobility initiatives, direct and in-kind assistance for low-income families such as SNAP, expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit in economically lagging regions, and financial incentives to encourage smoking cessation among people with low incomes. The researchers call for more effort to understand the most effective policies to increase educational opportunity, economic mobility, and targeted incentive programs.



**County Health Improvement Efforts.** Examples of efforts to address economic stability and poverty from [county health improvement plans](#):

- Dallas County has embarked on a major nutrition program to increase access to, and reverse the negative trend of fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Decatur County has been successful in attracting new business to increase job opportunities.
- Greene County has developed a coordinated system for persons who are homeless by meeting basic needs of housing, health care, food, and reliable transportation to pursue employment.
- In Humboldt County, the hospital purchased a bus to take patients to the hospital; a volunteer program is underway to provide transportation for other needs.
- In Sioux County, housing needs are being addressed by four communities.

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