Upward Mobility Initiative

Upward Mobility Data Dashboard Appendix

May 2025 Update

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ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is a leading research organization dedicated to developing evidence-based insights that improve people's lives and strengthen communities. For 50 years, Urban has been the trusted source for rigorous analysis of complex social and economic issues; strategic advice to policymakers, philanthropists, and practitioners; and new, promising ideas that expand opportunities for all. Our work inspires effective decisions that advance fairness and enhance the well-being of people and places.

ABOUT THE UPWARD MOBILITY INITIATIVE

The Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Initiative provides local leaders with data and tools to assess and improve conditions that advance upward mobility and racial equity in communities. Through our evidence-based framework for upward mobility efforts, local data for cities and counties throughout the US, and training and technical assistance, the initiative helps communities establish priorities, mobilize action, and assess progress toward ensuring all people can access long-term social and economic prosperity. For more information, visit upward-mobility.urban.org.

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Acknowledgments

For more information on the Upward Mobility Initiative, visit our website at https://upward-mobility.urban.org.

Errata

This appendix was corrected on June 3, 2025. On page 51, we have updated the text to reflect a methodological change. The two metrics we use to measure the "transportation access" indicator are the share of commuters who use public transit (not the transit trips index, as previously stated) and the share of income spent on transportation.

Introduction

What Are the Mobility Metrics?

In 2017, the Urban Institute hosted the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, which sought to better understand what it would take to dramatically increase mobility from poverty in this country. After a year of gathering insights from research, practice, and people who have experienced poverty, the Partnership developed an expansive definition of mobility from poverty that goes beyond **economic success**. It argued that mobility from poverty also requires that people have **power and autonomy**, or the ability to exercise control over their circumstances and influence the policies and practices that affect their lives, and that they feel valued by and have a **sense of belonging** in their communities.

Building on this holistic definition, in early 2019 Urban formed a working group of distinguished academics from diverse disciplines to help us explore the most seminal evidence on predictive factors that influence mobility from poverty for adults, families, and children. The working group vetted the strongest collective predictors of mobility from poverty and developed a set of 24 evidence-based predictors, along with specific, short- and medium-term measures for each predictor, that local change agents can use to assess and guide their efforts to advance upward mobility. We refer to this set of measures as the Mobility Metrics, and we continue to update them to better reflect research and the priorities of communities working to advance upward mobility locally.[1] Each predictor and its associated metric(s) falls within one of five pillars, which represent supports people need from their communities to achieve upward mobility. The five pillars are rewarding work, high-quality education, opportunity-rich and inclusive neighborhoods, healthy environment and access to good health care, and responsive and just governance.

Selection Criteria and Available Data

The Mobility Metrics data can be accessed via the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard and were last updated in May 2025. This appendix details the eight criteria we used to select metrics for each of the

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[1] For more information on the Mobility Metrics and the Upward Mobility Framework, see the first edition of the *Boosting Upward Mobility: Metrics to Inform Local Action* report at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/boosting-upward-mobility-metrics-inform-local-action and the second edition at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/boosting-upward-mobility-metrics-inform-local-action-second-edition; see also the accompanying technical report at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/boosting-upward-mobility-metrics-inform-local-action-second-edition-technical-report.

24 predictors, methodology changes in our calculation of the metrics, and data availability as of May 2025. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria.

For each predictor, we provide the following:

- a description of the predictor and its connection to upward mobility

- the metric(s) used to measure the predictor and their definitions

- assessments of how well the metrics meet our eight selection criteria

  » Validity: We selected validated metrics that are well established or accepted in research and policy and have been tested to accurately measure their predictor, both overall and for different populations.

  » Availability: We selected metrics that are widely and publicly available for communities nationwide. Because we prioritize data that are readily available for a wide range of geographies, superior local or regional data sources may be available for some places. We encourage users to use enhanced data sources where available and suggest additional sources of data at https://upward-mobility.urban.org/mobility-metrics/local-data.

  » Frequency: We selected metrics that are repeatedly measured at regular intervals so the data can be used for effective monitoring.

  » Geography: We selected metrics that are available at the city or county level and that are not overly sensitive to people moving in or out of the community.

  » Consistency: We selected metrics that are consistently collected and calculated over time and across geographies to ensure meaningful tracking and clear comparison within and across localities.

  » Structural equity and disaggregations: We selected metrics that can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and other important demographic characteristics so they can help identify structural inequity and reinforce that people experience poverty and upward mobility differently.

  » Structural relevance: When possible, we favor metrics that capture institutional and systemic factors rather than those measuring individual-level outcomes.

  » Limitations: Selected metrics represent the best available measures of our predictors, but may nonetheless have limitations. We include these for transparency's sake.

- potential alternatives to the metric selected

- the list of years and disaggregations ("categories") available for the metric on our Upward Mobility Data Dashboard and Data Catalog

- the specific data sources that we use to calculate each metric

- methodology changes (if any)

Rewarding Work: Employment Opportunities

Employment is usually people's main source of income, meaning it directly affects their economic success. Being employed and part of the workforce also allows people to contribute to the economy and society, reinforcing their sense of power and autonomy and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure employment opportunities using the share of adults ages 25 to 54 who are employed.

Share of Adults Ages 25 to 54 Who Are Employed

This metric is calculated as the percentage of adults ages 25 to 54 who are currently working. It is comparable with the employment-to-population ratio used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. However, unlike the BLS metric, which measures employment among people ages 16 and older, we focus on people ages 25 to 54. This age range better reflects those most likely to be in the workforce.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Employment captures what share of adults in a jurisdiction are engaging in work for pay. The employment-to-population ratio (EP) is a standard labor market metric reported monthly by the BLS and based on the Current Population Survey. The Working Group recommends applying the methodology used to compute the EP to similar data collected in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).

- **Availability:** Data on employment are available from the ACS.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually. For disaggregated analyses in less populated areas, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the county and metropolitan levels.

- **Consistency:** Information on employment and age is measured the same way across all geographies in the same year and over time in the ACS.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The metric can be disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, and other demographic factors. For less populated areas and for certain demographic groups, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric measures a community's capacity to provide opportunities for gainful employment—a systemic condition that supports economic success, power and autonomy, and dignity and belonging for the residents of that community.

- **Limitations:** The BLS reports the official EP monthly for people ages 16 and older as well as those ages 20 and older. As such, the BLS-reported measure could be lower for jurisdictions that have many young adults attending college rather than working and for those that have many retirees. Consequently, for our purposes, we recommend computing the EP for adults ages 25 to 54 using data from the ACS rather than relying on BLS reports. Even when using ACS data, the EP can drop if unemployed people leave an area or if working people move in.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered the official unemployment rate, which is the ratio of all unemployed people to all people in the labor force (to be considered "in the labor force," a person must either be working or actively looking for work). The group also considered an alternative version of the unemployment rate that includes people who are marginally attached to work and the labor force. The unemployment rate, however measured, can rise for "good" reasons (at least in the short term) if people enter the labor force in large numbers because they feel their chances of finding work are rising.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

  » For disaggregated data: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016, 2014

- Categories: race/ethnicity, disability status, gender

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau 1-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

Rewarding Work: Jobs Paying Living Wages

Living-wage jobs provide opportunities for work that enable people to meet their families' financial needs, supporting both economic success and feelings of dignity and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure jobs paying living wages using pay on the average job compared with the cost of living.

Pay on an Average Job Compared with the Cost of Living

This metric is computed by dividing the average wage paid by jobs in a given community by the cost of basic expenses for a family of three (one adult and two children) in that community (as calculated by researchers at MIT). Values greater than 1 indicate that the average job pays more than the cost of living, and values less than 1 suggest the average job pays less.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Employer-reported data on wages paid are a reliable indicator of what jobs pay, and the metric is based on data collected and disseminated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Determining what it costs to meet basic expenses requires detailed studies of the costs of food, clothing, shelter, health care, and work-related expenses for each jurisdiction. We rely on the work of well-regarded scholars at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to obtain estimates of the local cost of living.

- **Availability**: Data on wages are available quarterly from the BLS's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, and estimates of the cost of meeting a family's basic needs, referred to as a living wage, are available annually from MIT.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** Data on wages are available at the county and metropolitan levels. Data on living wages are available at the county level.

- **Consistency:** Information on quarterly wages is collected consistently by the BLS. MIT uses a consistent methodology to compute living wages by county.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The data cannot be disaggregated by demographics because they describe jobs rather than the people in them, but we can disaggregate by industry type.

- **Structural relevance:** Rather than individual income or employment outcomes, this metric measures the systemic conditions of employment in a community and whether the employment opportunities are sufficient to provide the economic success people need to be upwardly mobile.

- **Limitations:** The metric can only be computed for the 365 largest counties and cannot be disaggregated by demographics. The metric relies on MIT's computations of "living wages."

Alternatives

The Working Group debated trying to measure access to "good" jobs but concluded that the attributes of a good job may differ depending on a person's needs. For example, a night shift might be desirable for some workers. Furthermore, a focus on good jobs could downplay the importance of career paths, where the path to a good job may require experience in less-desirable jobs. Also, obtaining consistent data on job attributes, such as nonwage benefits, promotion opportunities, and work scheduling practices, is challenging, and such data likely could not be gathered for all industries and occupations.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2018, 2014

- Categories: industry

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data

- US Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Living Wage Calculator

- Living Wage Institute Inc., "Benchmark Living Wage Data Series," 2024

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

Starting in 2023, living-wage estimates use an updated methodology that will make it easier to compare estimates across years going forward. Data for 2023 include (and data for years after 2023 are expected to include) new civic engagement and internet and mobile cost categories and an improved child care cost calculation. As a result, data from before 2023 may not be comparable with data from 2023 and after.

Rewarding Work: Opportunities for Income

Income is a direct measure of prosperity. Therefore, having opportunities to earn more income improves a person's prospects for economic success. Higher incomes are also associated with higher academic achievement and educational attainment, better physical and mental health, and fewer behavioral problems in children. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure opportunities for income using household income at the 20th, 50th, and 80th percentiles.

Household Income at 20th, 50th, and 80th Percentiles

This metric captures financial inequality by illustrating the differences in annual household income between the poorest 20 percent of households, the median household, and the richest 20 percent of households in a community. To identify income percentiles, all households are ranked by income from lowest to highest in the community.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** These are well-established measures, and several federal agencies and many scholars frequently use them to assess families' financial well-being.

- **Availability:** Data on household income are available from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey and Public Use Microdata Sample.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually. For disaggregated analyses in less populated areas, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the county and metropolitan levels.

- **Consistency:** Income data are measured the same way across all geographies in the same year. The measure is fairly consistent over time, but changes in the phrasing and sequence of income-source questions might affect comparisons over time. When such changes have occurred in other federal surveys, such as the Current Population Survey, the Census Bureau provides bridge-year data so users can assess the effects of survey changes.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The metric can be disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, and other demographic factors. For less populated areas and for certain demographic groups, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Structural relevance:** Rather than individual income or employment outcomes, this metric measures the systemic conditions of employment in a community and whether the employment opportunities are sufficient to provide the economic success individuals need to be upwardly mobile.

- **Limitations:** The purchasing power of any particular level of income will differ based on the local cost of living. Also, because household sizes differ, the same income may be stretched across larger average households in some places relative to others. Like all metrics based on the characteristics of people living in an area, it can change because of residential mobility.

Alternatives

Among measures of income, the Working Group initially considered a metric of median and bottom quartile incomes but decided to include a higher income percentile to better identify income inequality. Research shows not only that incomes have been rising more rapidly for those at the higher end of the income distribution but also that increasing income inequality contributes to lower rates of upward mobility. The Working Group also examined using wages for this predictor but preferred income because of its increased precision at lower levels of geography and standard interpretation without the need for additional qualifiers such as hours worked per week.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

  » For disaggregated data: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016, 2014

- Categories: race/ethnicity

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau 1-Year American Community Survey (via IPUMS)

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

Rewarding Work: Financial Security

Having the financial resources to withstand unexpected income losses, health emergencies, and other crises supports people's economic success and sense of power and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure financial security using the share of adults with debt in collections.

Share of Adults with Debt in Collections

This measure captures the share of adults with a credit bureau record that has progressed from being past due to being in collections. Debt in collections includes past-due credit lines that have been closed and charged off on the creditor's books and unpaid bills reported to the credit bureaus that the creditor is attempting to collect. Any debt includes credit card debt, auto/retail loans, medical debt, student loan debt, and more.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Delinquent debt as measured by debt in collections is a valid and strong measure of financial distress.

- **Availability:** Drawn directly from credit reports, the credit bureau data are national and uniform across the country. The data are restricted and are not accessible directly from credit bureaus but are made available publicly by the Urban Institute.

- **Frequency:** New data for this metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** Data on households with debt in collections are available by zip code or county.

- **Consistency:** The share of households with debt in collections can be measured consistently for all geographies. The measure is likely to remain consistent over time unless the credit bureaus change the way overdue debt is captured in credit reporting.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The credit bureau data do not include information about race. But the debt value can be disaggregated by subarea when used in combination with the American Community Survey to identify the racial or ethnic composition of neighborhoods (zip codes) with more or less debt in collections. We distinguish zip codes that are majority non-Hispanic white or majority nonwhite. For counties, a majority is defined as at least 60 percent of residents. For cities, a majority is defined as at least 50 percent of residents.

- **Structural relevance:** The metric measures the level of debt in a community, not the debt held by individuals, which points to mobility-related systemic conditions such as poverty, or a lack of access to financial opportunities and independence.

- **Limitations:** Along with the limitations related to subgroups, these data do not capture "credit invisible" households, meaning those without a credit record. As a measure of financial well-being, even if few households have debt in collections, many may still have too little wealth or savings to be primed for upward mobility. This metric is somewhat sensitive to residential mobility. If many residents without overdue debt move in or out of a county or zip code, or if many residents with overdue debt move in or out, this metric could shift.

Alternatives

The Working Group acknowledged the potential benefits of a measure of assets, savings, and/or wealth as part of financial security, but these measures are unavailable at the local level in most places, and even where available (e.g., National Asset Scorecard for Communities of Color), the data are not regularly updated.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years:

»   For counties:

- Any debt: 2023, 2022, 2018
- Medical debt: 2023

»   For cities:

- Any debt: 2021

■ Categories: race/ethnicity

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

■ credit bureau data from Urban Institute Debt in America feature (counties)

■ credit bureau data from Urban Institute Financial Health and Wealth Dashboard (cities)

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

Starting in 2022, the three nationwide credit-reporting companies made significant changes to medical debt reporting. These changes reduced the share of people with medical debt in collections reported on their credit records but not necessarily the overall share of people with medical debt in collections. As a result, data from 2022 and later may not be comparable with data from before 2022.

Rewarding Work: Wealth-Building Opportunities

Opportunities to create net worth and improve financial security strengthen people's ability to weather economic shocks, invest in physical health, and build more sustainable wealth, all of which support their economic success and sense of power and autonomy. Children from wealthier families also tend to have better academic, health, and behavioral outcomes than children from low- or no-wealth families. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

This predictor is measured by the ratio of the share of total home values owned by a racial or ethnic group to the share of households of the same group.

Ratio of the Share of Total Home Values Owned by a Racial or Ethnic Group to the Share of Households of the Same Group

This metric highlights an aspect of racial and ethnic disparities in access to wealth that reflects structural inequities. Home value is based on the primary residence home and is self-reported. This metric does not account for the extent of mortgage debt, and does not account for other important demographic variations, such as differences in age composition across racial and ethnic groups. As such, this metric may not fully reflect the size of the housing wealth gap.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Although this ratio is not commonly used, each piece of the ratio is. The calculation of primary-residence housing wealth is consistent with the literature. The share of racial and

ethic groups among the household population is commonly used. The juxtaposition of these two shares has been used to highlight housing wealth equity and homeownership wealth gaps.

- **Availability:** Data for this ratio are available annually from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

- **Frequency:** The data are collected annually. For disaggregated analyses for less populated areas, it may be necessary to pool several years of data to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the county and metropolitan levels.

- **Consistency:** This metric is defined consistently across racial and ethnic groups, is consistently measured over time, and is comparable across geographies.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric captures the racial disparities apparent in ways wealth is shared across a given population. This helps elucidate any racial or ethnic disparities in comparative housing wealth and how it has been accessed or distributed in that community, rather than focusing on an aggregate measure of total homeownership. These disparities can signal instances of racism in achieving or benefiting from homeownership.

- **Structural relevance:** This ratio characterizes the distribution of aggregate housing wealth to describe a community-level condition, rather than an individual outcome, such as the average value of household wealth.

- **Limitations:** This metric only captures relative wealth-building opportunities and does not capture absolute wealth-building opportunities. It is possible that a community with very little housing wealth has an equitable distribution of that wealth. This community will rate well under this metric. This metric will also be imprecise or suppressed for communities that lack racial or ethnic diversity. Although we refer to this metric as housing wealth, the data reflect homeowners' self-assessments of the value of their homes and does not account for mortgage debt. Black and Latino households, on average, buy their homes with more debt, so the racial housing wealth disparities are likely to widen if mortgage debt is incorporated. This metric also does not account for other financial costs and benefits of homeownership that could affect wealth building. It also does not account for other important differences, such as the average age of people in different racial and ethnic groups. One would expect older people to have higher-value homes than younger people, so some racial and ethnic disparities could be exaggerated by age differences. Therefore, this metric may not fully reflect the size of the actual housing wealth gap and could be misleading without a deeper understanding of homeownership and demographic circumstances in a community. Further, this metric focuses

on only one form of wealth based on homeownership and does not consider other forms of wealth, like owning a business, stocks, or bonds.

Alternatives

We considered a metric of the share of minority-owned businesses; however, many new small businesses fail, which can lead to wealth loss or debt. We also considered a more structural the number of residents of color per minority-owned financial institution. The evidence shows that such institutions offer a larger share of small-business loans to people of color, but the prevalence of these institutions is so low that most jurisdictions would show zero. And although these institutions can play an important role, they do not represent the primary source of capital for any group.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Categories: age

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau 1-Year American Community Survey, US Census Bureau 1-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)
- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

High-Quality Education: Access to Preschool

High enrollment in quality preschool is associated with larger shares of a community's children being prepared to start school ready to learn and with the cognitive and social skills needed to succeed in an academic setting and beyond. Access to preschool contributes to better academic outcomes for children from low-income households, and better academic outcomes earlier in life contribute to economic success in adulthood. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure access to preschool using the share of 3- and 4-year-old children enrolled in nursery school or preschool.

Share of 3- and 4-Year-Old Children Enrolled in Nursery School or Preschool

This metric reflects enrollment in nursery or preschool as reported by parents. Higher rates of parent-reported enrollment suggest a community's residents have greater access to crucial early education opportunities.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Federal agencies including the National Center for Education Statistics use household survey data to ascertain nursery and preschool enrollment.

- **Availability:** Enrollment data are available annually from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey and Public Use Microdata Sample.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually. For disaggregated analyses in less populated areas, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the county and metropolitan levels.

- **Consistency:** Information pertaining to nursery school and preschool enrollment is measured the same way across all geographies in the same year and over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The metric can be disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, and other demographic factors. For less populated areas and for certain demographic groups, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Structural relevance:** Access to preschool is a critical measure of systemic conditions that affect social and economic mobility, starting with access to quality education. Addressing these conditions requires comprehensive strategies that include increasing funding for early childhood education, ensuring affordability and accessibility, investing in quality improvements, and addressing broader social and economic inequalities that undermine access.

- **Limitations:** This metric can change over time if fertility patterns change or if families with young children who move out of or into a jurisdiction have very different propensities for enrolling their children in preschools than parents with young children who remain in the jurisdiction. Because the American Community Survey data do not capture the quality of preschool, enrollment figures may overstate exposure to the kinds of programs most likely to improve short-term academic outcomes and long-term outcomes such as mobility from poverty.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered measuring enrollment in high-quality preschool programs but feared that obtaining reliable and consistent measures of quality across jurisdiction would prove infeasible. Other metrics considered included enrollment in state or local prekindergarten or Head Start. That metric is nationally available but not standardized, and reporting varies across states and localities. Although Head Start data collection is standardized nationally, it occurs at the grantee level; grantees may operate one or more programs within and across community and state lines.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016, 2014
- Categories: race/ethnicity, income

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

High-Quality Education: Effective Public Education

School quality affects children's cognitive and social development. Lower-quality schools reduce children's chances of attending and succeeding at postsecondary institutions, negatively affecting their potential for economic success in adulthood. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure effective public education using the average annual improvement in English Language Arts.

Average Annual Improvement in English Language Arts

This metric captures the impact or quality of the schools children attend, using nationally standardized state assessments for English Language Arts, which includes reading comprehension and written expression. It reports the average per year improvement among public and charter school students between third and eighth grade. Assessments are normalized so that typical learning growth is roughly one grade level a year. Values above 1 indicate an above-average rate of learning, and values below 1 indicate a below-average rate of learning.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** State assessments are well defined and validated but differ by state. The Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA) standardized these to be nationally comparable and comparable over time.

- **Availability:** State assessment data are available from the SEDA.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the school district and county levels.

- **Consistency:** Tests of student progress differ by state and can change over time if states modify their tests. The SEDA has standardized these to be comparable over time and space.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The SEDA provides adjusted scores by race or ethnicity, income, and gender.

- **Structural relevance:** High-quality public education is a structural measure as it has implications for access to further education, access to social capital and quality employment, and adequate income.

- **Limitations:** Not all counties report assessments for all grades, so some estimates may be based on fewer data points. SEDA manipulated the underlying data to introduce noise to ensure confidentiality, which compromises data quality. Residential mobility into or out of a county may result in the "cohort" not being the same between the third and eighth grades. The interpretation can be complicated when comparing across groups. For example, research suggests that annual improvement in English for Hispanic children will exceed that for non-Hispanic white children because on average, Hispanic children start with lower levels of English language skills and can improve more quickly than children with higher baseline skills. It is important to keep these concepts in mind when interpreting results.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered several other metrics to measure school quality including per pupil expenditures, chronic absenteeism, and adjusted cohort graduation rates. Per pupil expenditures equates the resources available to students with school quality based on the well-established finding that resources per pupil is correlated with student achievement. However, money is an imperfect indicator of quality, because certain districts may have higher costs than others, and some may spend money on activities that are better connected to student achievement and well-being than others. Like many school-quality metrics that depend on school-based reporting, chronic absenteeism is "gameable." For example, misleading measures can result from excluding suspensions or excused absences, from decisions about how to deal with students who miss individual classes but not entire days, or from simple measurement or reporting errors. And graduation rates are subject to errors, inadvertent or deliberate, in determining the number of students who could graduate (the denominator for computing graduation rates). For example, failure to distinguish between students who transfer (or other exclusions) and those who drop out can bias the numbers.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Categories: race/ethnicity, income, gender

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA), (Version 5.0)[2]

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[2] Sean F. Reardon, Andrew Ho, Ben Shear, Erin Fahle, Demetra Kalogrides, and Jim Saliba, Stanford Education Data Archive (Version 5.0), 2024, https://doi.org/10.25740/cs829jn7849.

High-Quality Education: School Economic Diversity

Children of color and children from low-income households achieve better academic outcomes when they attend economically and racially diverse schools, and better academic outcomes earlier in life contribute to academic success in adulthood. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure school economic diversity using the share of students attending high-poverty schools.

Share of Students Attending High-Poverty Schools, by Race or Ethnicity

This metric reflects the extent of racial disparities in students' exposure to school-level concentrated poverty. It reports the share of students in each racial or ethnic group attending public and charter schools in which at least 20 percent of students come from households with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This metric captures the interaction of economic and racial segregation of schools and therefore reveals whether (and to what degree) students of color are more likely than white students to attend schools with large concentrations of classmates experiencing poverty. Higher concentrations of students experiencing poverty are associated with worse achievement for all the students in a school.

- **Availability:** This metric can be constructed using information from the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data through the Urban Institute's Education Data Portal. Those data come from an annual census of schools reporting total enrollment by race across each grade. That census includes a measure of "economic disadvantage" for students based on their eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals, which is used as a proxy for poverty.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** This metric can be computed at the school district, city, and county levels. Because this metric reflects the structural conditions facing a jurisdiction's students, changes in the metric may represent changes to those structural conditions.

- **Consistency:** Not all states report free or reduced-price lunch. Instead, four states report the number of students directly certified. Two other states report both free and reduced-priced lunches and the number of students directly certified across schools. However, this metric overall is consistently defined and calculated for cities and counties.

- **Structural equity and subgroups:** This metric is by definition disaggregated by race or ethnicity.

- **Structural relevance:** Measures of socioeconomic segregation point to systemic conditions such as access to quality education, health care, social capital, and opportunities, all of which affect upward mobility.

- **Limitations:** Some school districts confer eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals using community eligibility standards that can apply to clusters of schools as well as entire districts. For example, if a cluster of schools serves a set of low-income neighborhoods, and across the schools, 40 percent or more of the students qualify for free and reduced-price meals, the district can provide meals to all students at all schools in the cluster even if one of the schools wouldn't meet the threshold on its own. Consequently, this metric may overstate student poverty exposure in those districts. Fortunately, the data sources for this metric enable us to identify the districts using this approach, and findings can be interpreted with this in mind. Changes in this metric need to be assessed with reference to changes in the area's overall racial or ethnic composition and the poverty rate among its residents.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered other student segregation indices that focus either on income (people with income above or below the federal poverty level) or on race or ethnicity, but they concluded that this set of metrics effectively homes in on differences in economic segregation by race and ethnicity.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data

- Urban Institute Modeled Estimates of Poverty in Schools, School (via Education Data Portal v. 0.23.0, Urban Institute, under ODC Attribution License)

High-Quality Education: Preparation for College

Having a high school degree or other requisite education to enroll in and benefit from a two- or four-year college program allows students to build skills that can lead to sustained success in the labor market. College readiness is critical for students to attend, complete, and succeed at postsecondary institutions, which affects their economic success. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure preparation for college using the share of 19- and 20-year-olds with a high school degree.

Share of 19- and 20-Year-Olds with a High School Degree

High school completion is a widely used measure of basic educational attainment and readiness for postsecondary education. Diverse educational pathways, such as adult education programs or GED completion, allow people outside this age range to complete high school. However, students traditionally complete high school around ages 18 and 19, so focusing on this group allows us to evaluate the success of the traditional K–12 educational model and capture when most young adults enter the labor market or higher education. "High school degree" means graduating high school or completing a GED.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Earning a high school degree is an important prerequisite for pursuing additional schooling, and although not all high school graduates are ready to enroll in college, high school

completion is a well understood and widely used measure of educational attainment. Data on educational attainment are collected in a variety of federal surveys.

- **Availability:** Data on educational attainment are available from the American Community Survey.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually. For disaggregated analyses in less populated areas, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the county and metropolitan levels.

- **Consistency:** Information on high school graduation is measured the same way across all geographies in the same year and over time in the American Community Survey.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The metric can be disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, and other demographic factors. For less populated areas and for certain demographic groups, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric points to more than individual high school outcomes, as it measures the strength and adequacy of local education systems and neighborhood conditions to prepare young adults for education and employment opportunities that will positively affect their autonomy, economic security, and sense of belonging.

- **Limitations:** Young adults moving in and out of an area can affect this metric.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered more specific measures of college readiness beyond simply earning a high school degree, including 11th grade academic assessments and student grade point averages, but not all states assess academic achievement in the 11th grade, and approaches to grading differ considerably even within districts. As such, the Working Group settled on this very broad metric for both its relevance and consistency.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016, 2014

- Categories: race/ethnicity, disability status, gender

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

High-Quality Education: Digital Access

Access to high-speed internet allows people to fully participate in a digital society. A lack of access adversely affects childhood cognitive development, educational attainment, and skill building, all of which are strongly linked to people's economic success and sense of power and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure digital access using the share of households with a computer and broadband internet subscription in the home.

Share of Households with a Computer and Broadband Internet Subscription in the Home

This metric reflects a community's digital divide by measuring in-home access to a computer and broadband high-speed internet (such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL). Computers include desktops, laptops, netbook or notebook computers, and tablets.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** The US Census Bureau uses a series of questions to measure aspects of digital access across the nation. Existing literature makes use of these measures of digital access.

- **Availability:** Data for this metric are publicly available nationwide through the American Community Survey.

- **Frequency:** Data are collected annually.

- **Geography:** These data are available at the county, city, census tract, and block group levels.

- **Consistency:** The metric can be measured in the same way across geographies and over time, but in 2016 some changes were made to the survey questions required to construct this metric. Crosswalks were used to allow the creation of comparable five-year data for post-2016 datasets.

- **Structural equity and subgroups:** The digital divide is about the degree of inequity in digital access by demographics (including race and ethnicity) and by geography (e.g., urban versus rural). Because this metric can be disaggregated along those dimensions, it can provide insights into structural equity at the community level. The data can be disaggregated by household income and by demographics of the head of household, such as race, ethnicity, and gender.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric measures whether households have access to a computer and an internet subscription and can therefore reflect structural factors such as the affordability and availability of broadband services.

- **Limitations:** Access to computing devices and internet does not capture the quality or reliability of that connection. Not all broadband is fast enough to meet the needs of all households. This metric does not account for the reasons why a household does not have access to a computer or an internet subscription. A lack of access could owe to insufficient infrastructure, cost, or a lack of personal interest. Rural areas typically lack the infrastructure that can support the deployment of high-speed internet, such as fiber-optic cables or even basic utilities like electricity in some remote locations. Low-income urban areas also tend to have less high-speed broadband coverage.

Alternatives

We considered metrics that only measure internet access in the home or access to a computer device in the home. As technology is fast shifting and data collection on and around technology is changing, we will continue to explore measures that best capture the essential aspects of the digital divide and revise our metric accordingly.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2021, 2018

- Categories: race, income

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

For all years, we replaced digital access data with new data based on our updated definitions of internet access and internet-accessible devices. Households with digital access are now defined as households where any member was subscribed to a broadband (high-speed) internet service and where any member owned or used any of a list of devices that includes desktop computers and other portable wireless computers such as laptops and tablets. Smartphone devices and internet access via satellite, dial-up, and cell phone data plan, which were included in our original calculation, are now excluded.

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods: Housing Affordability

To meet housing costs, people may sacrifice access to reliable transportation, educational attainment, and residence in high-opportunity areas. Affordable housing lifts some of this burden by keeping families in good physical, mental, and financial health, which can improve their economic outcomes and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure housing affordability using the number of housing units that are affordable and available for every 100 households with low incomes (i.e., incomes below 80 percent of the area median income, or AMI), every 100 households with very low incomes (i.e., incomes below 50 percent of the AMI), and every 100 households with extremely low incomes (i.e., incomes below 30 percent of the AMI).

Number of Affordable and Available Housing Units per 100 Households with Low, Very Low, and Extremely Low Incomes

This metric reflects the availability of housing options for households with low incomes. It reports the number of housing units that are affordable and available for every 100 households with low incomes (below 80 percent of area median income, or AMI), every 100 households with very low incomes (below 50 percent of AMI), and every 100 households with extremely low incomes (below 30 percent of AMI). Housing is considered affordable when monthly costs fall at or below 30 percent of a household's income. A unit is affordable and available at a given income level if it (1) meets our definition of affordable for that income level and (2) is either vacant or occupied by a renter or owner with the same or a lower income. Values below 100 suggest the housing stock does not meet the need.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity**: Affordable and available housing ratios of this type are widely applied in studies of local housing market conditions and trends. The income categories and the affordability and availability standards are well established and accepted in both research and policy.

- **Availability**: These ratios can be constructed using data from the American Community Survey and income categories defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, both of which are publicly available nationwide.

- **Frequency**: These ratios can be updated annually.

- **Geography**: Affordable housing ratios can be computed by city or county. For less populous areas, it may be necessary to pool multiple years of data and report moving averages.

- **Consistency**: Affordable housing ratios can be computed consistently for all counties and cities over time. Because the income categories are calculated relative to AMI, the affordability metric appropriately reflects local economic conditions.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations**: Because these ratios focus on the characteristics of the housing stock, stratifying by demographic subgroups is not meaningful. However, housing units in each affordability category can be stratified by size (number of bedrooms) and tenure (owned or rented).

- **Structural relevance**: This metric reflects any imbalance in supply and demand for affordable housing, which has implications for systemic factors that affect upward mobility, such as wealth distribution, zoning and land use regulations, development planning, and environmental segregation.

- **Limitations**: These shares do not reflect the quality of the available and affordable housing units. Units counted as available and affordable for households with low or very low incomes may be of poor quality or too small to meet household needs. This metric is somewhat sensitive to patterns of residential mobility. For example, if the number of households with

very low incomes were to decline (because of outmigration, for instance), this metric would show improvement even if no additional affordable units were produced.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered average housing cost burden and the share of households with unaffordable housing costs (i.e., costs above 30 percent of household income). These metrics are more sensitive to changes in a jurisdiction's population. The Working Group decided that the recommended metric better reflects structural conditions of affordable housing availability at the local level.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Categories: tenure

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, Fair Market Rents and Income Limits

- US Census Bureau 1-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

We made multiple corrections to all years of data for this metric, including fixing errors in a conditional logic statement, in deduplication of the microdata (which affected less than 1 percent of the microdata records), and in the coding of missing data. We also fixed an error that was leading to inconsistent treatment of the Chugach and Copper River census areas in Alaska. In addition, we updated income

limits to interpolate based on 2020 populations instead of 2017 populations and adjusted Connecticut data to be organized by planning region (instead of county) for 2022 and later years.

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods: Housing Stability

Housing instability and homelessness contribute to unemployment and financial insecurity and undermine both physical and emotional health. They also represent extreme manifestations of powerlessness and loss of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure housing affordability using the number and share of public-school children who are ever homeless during the school year.

Number and Share of Public-School Children Who Are Ever Homeless during the School Year

Homelessness reflects high levels of housing instability in a community. It's defined as living with others because of housing loss or economic hardship; living in shelters, transitional housing, and unsheltered locations; or living in motels or hotels because of a lack of other accommodations. The number of students experiencing homelessness is based on the number of children (ages 3 through 12th grade) who are enrolled in public schools and reported by local education agencies as having one of the following as their primary nighttime residence at any time during a school year: a shelter, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement; unsheltered (e.g., a car, park, campground, temporary trailer, or abandoned building); a hotel or motel, because of the lack of alternative, adequate accommodations; or in other people's housing because of a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. The share of public-school students experiencing homelessness is based on the share of those students out of all public-school students in a given jurisdiction.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the

data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Data are reported by school administrators and generally verified by local liaisons and state coordinators. This is a direct and well-established measure of homelessness for children that results from and reflects housing instability among families and unaccompanied children. The definition of homelessness used for this metric extends beyond literal homelessness to effectively include the full range of circumstances in which a family does not have a stable home of their own.

- **Availability:** The US Department of Education requires every local education agency to collect and report these data.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** The boundaries of local education agencies can be mapped onto to the city and county levels.

- **Consistency:** This metric is consistently defined, collected, and reported for all local education agencies nationwide.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric can be disaggregated based on students' disability status and whether they are enrolled in English as a Second Language courses, among other things.

- **Structural relevance:** Rather than individual outcomes, this metric measures a symptom of systemic issues such as income and employment disparities, access to long-term affordable housing, and support systems tied with academic attendance and performance.

- **Limitations:** This metric does not include homeless adults who are childless, and it does not capture homelessness among children who do not enroll in public school. Further, it could show improvement if the families of homeless children move to a neighboring jurisdiction or if policies "push" them out. This metric is quite sensitive to patterns of residential mobility if large numbers of families with very low incomes flow into or out of a local education agency's boundary.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered several other metrics for housing instability. The number of people experiencing homelessness on a given day—collected through point-in-time counts and available from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development—is a common and well known measure of homelessness, but data on this metric are collected by continuums of care, which can consist of a city or one or more counties, and rural areas can be collapsed into a "balance of state" that covers a vast area. The geographic areas of continuums of care do not align with census-based geographies, making point-in-time counts difficult to align with other relevant geographies. The incidence of eviction was also considered, but eviction data are not yet available nationally at the local level nor are they consistently updated. Measures of overcrowding (e.g., more than one person per room) do not reliably reflect housing instability, and such "doubling up" is not consistently measured for a broad population. Other common measures of housing instability, such as being behind on rent or mortgage payments, being forced to move, or moving for cost reasons, lack the geographic coverage and specificity needed to examine changes over time at the local level.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Disaggregated data: 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019

- Categories: race/ethnicity

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- US Department of Education, Local Education Agency data, School Years (via ED Data Express, Homeless Students Enrolled)

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods: Economic Inclusion

The socioeconomic conditions of neighborhoods and school systems affect people's health, education, and employment outcomes. Communities with higher levels of class-based segregation suffer from lower levels of economic stability and health, which can erode people's sense of power and autonomy and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure economic inclusion using the share of people experiencing poverty who live in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Share of People Experiencing Poverty Who Live in High-Poverty Neighborhoods

This metric reflects the extent of economic segregation in a community. A high-poverty neighborhood is a census tract where more than 40 percent of residents live in poverty, meaning their income (before taxes and excluding capital gains or noncash benefits) is below the poverty threshold. Poverty thresholds are defined by the US Census Bureau and differ by the size of the family and age of its members, but do not differ geographically. Poverty thresholds are updated annually to adjust for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Measures of poverty concentration have been widely used to measure the extent and severity of economic exclusion and isolation. The more concentrated and separate people

in poverty are from better-resourced neighbors, the more isolated they are from the larger community and the social and economic resources and opportunities it can provide.

- **Availability:** Data required to compute poverty concentration are available from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** This metric can be computed for all cities and counties nationwide. For less populated areas, several years of data may need to be pooled. Because this metric reflects the structural conditions facing a city or county's residents, changes in the metric possibly caused by people moving into or out of a jurisdiction do represent changes to those structural conditions.

- **Consistency:** Poverty concentration can be consistently defined and calculated across all cities and counties over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The metric can be disaggregated by race or ethnicity, gender, and other demographic factors. For less populated areas and for certain demographic groups, several years of data may need to be pooled to obtain reliable estimates.

- **Structural relevance:** This measure of neighborhood poverty concentration emphasizes disparate environmental conditions, such as access to housing, education, social capital, and health care, rather than individual poverty status or outcomes.

- **Limitations:** This metric can be sensitive to the overall poverty rate of a city or county. Therefore, changes in poverty concentrations need to be assessed with reference to the city or county's overall poverty rate.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered other measures of segregation, such as the dissimilarity index, isolation index, exposure index, and variance ratio index, all of which can be applied to an economic context. However, compared with the poverty concentration metric, these are more challenging to calculate and to interpret for a broad audience.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016, 2014 2014

- Categories: race/ethnicity

Data used to calculate this metric comes from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods: Racial Diversity

Neighborhoods that are segregated by race and ethnicity perpetuate exclusion and prevent people of different races and ethnicities from building the social ties that foster mutual respect, dignity, and belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure racial diversity using an index of people's exposure to neighbors of different races and ethnicities.

Index of People's Exposure to Neighbors of Different Races and Ethnicities

Racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods are hallmarks of inclusive communities. This set of metrics is constructed separately for each racial or ethnic group and reports the average share of that group's neighbors who are members of other racial or ethnic groups. It reports the shares of people who are Black or Hispanic in the census tract of the average white person, the shares of people who are white or Hispanic in the census tract of the average Black person, and the shares of people who are Black or white in the census tract of the average Hispanic person. A higher value indicates greater exposure to people of different races and ethnicities.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** The exposure index is one of several widely used measures of residential segregation or inclusion. It effectively captures the multiracial or multiethnic diversity of American communities, it reflects the experiences of people of all races and ethnicities, and it provides a comprehensive picture of neighborhood racial and ethnic composition.

- **Availability:** Data required to compute neighborhood exposure indexes are available from the American Community Survey.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** The data are available for cities and counties but also at the neighborhood level. Because this metric reflects the structural conditions facing a jurisdiction's residents, changes in the metric that may be caused by people moving into or out of a jurisdiction represent changes to those structural conditions.

- **Consistency:** Exposure indexes can be consistently defined and calculated for all jurisdictions over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric is by definition disaggregated by race or ethnicity.

- **Structural relevance:** Neighborhood racial segregation points to systemic conditions that perpetuate inequality and hinder social and economic mobility. These conditions affect housing, education, health care, employment, and political representation and indicate a need to dismantle discriminatory practices, invest in underserved communities, and foster inclusive and integrated neighborhoods.

- **Limitations:** This measure can be sensitive to the overall racial or ethnic composition of a city or county. Therefore, changes in exposure indexes need to be assessed with reference to the city or county's overall racial or ethnic composition. Further, although this index can be constructed annually, appreciable changes may take many years to observe.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered several other measures that have been widely used in analyses of residential segregation, including the social isolation index; the index of dissimilarity; the neighborhood segregation index; and different isolated dimensions of segregation, such as clustering, centralization, and concentration. However, these measures focus on the extent of separation between two racial or ethnic groups (white people versus Black people, for example, or white people versus all other groups), whereas the exposure index provides the simplest and most direct reflection of neighborhood inclusion in a multiracial or multiethnic context.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods: Social Capital

Social capital is the resources people get from their close friends and extended social circles, such as personal support from family and employment opportunities from friends. Whether built in person or virtually, social connections between community members—especially among those from different economic backgrounds—can facilitate upward mobility and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure social capital using two metrics: the number of membership associations per 10,000 people, which captures community-wide social infrastructure, and the economic connectedness index, which captures the diversity of bonds among community members.

Number of Membership Associations per 10,000 People

Membership associations offer opportunities to form robust social networks and build trust in a community. This metric measures the number of membership associations (as self-reported by businesses and organizations) per 10,000 people in a community. It captures the total number and type of membership associations in all counties in the US (e.g., civic organizations, bowling centers, golf clubs, fitness centers, sports organizations, religious organizations, political organizations, labor organizations, business organizations, and professional organizations).

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** The County Business Patterns (CBP) data from the US Census Bureau are well established and widely used by academics and other researchers across the country. Research supports their use as a measure for social trust because social trust is increased when people belong to voluntary groups and organizations. People who belong to such a group tend to

trust others who belong to that group. The more such groups per person, the more likely that individuals in those communities belong to one or more groups.

- **Availability:** The data required to compute this metric are available from the Census Bureau's CBP data. CBP datasets are available for download from the US Census Bureau website.[3]

- **Frequency:** The data are collected annually in the US Census Bureau's Business Register.

- **Geography:** This measure can be computed for all counties and zip codes.

- **Consistency:** This metric is clearly defined and has been consistently measured since 2012 and for the entire US population. CBP data are derived from the Business Register, which is maintained and updated by the Census Bureau to track all known single- and multi-establishment employer companies in the US.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** Because this metric focuses on the number of membership associations, disaggregating by demographic subgroups is limited. In a jurisdiction comprising more than one zip code, it is possible to compare organizations per 10,000 residents in zip codes whose residents are disproportionately representative of any particular demographic group (e.g., comparing the metric for zip codes in which 60 percent or more of the residents are Black to zip codes that are more mixed).

- **Structural relevance:** This metric reflects the availability of opportunities for engagement and relationship-building and important structural support for social capital.

- **Limitations:** This metric captures only a certain aspect of social capital. It is trying to measure social associations in a community and is likely the best measure in the context of business and professional organizations. Nevertheless, it cannot capture (a) social associations at the granular, individual level, or (b) smaller, more informal organizations of groups of people that would not be in a position to self-report to the Business Register.

Alternatives

The Mobility Metrics Working Group considered a variety of metrics to measure social capital, including response rates to the census, participation in civic organizations, and rates of volunteering, before landing on a survey-based metric that proved too challenging to collect. In concert with the

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[3] The Social Associations metric is also available through County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The metric is available nationally in standardized form for all counties and can be constructed from its constituent data components (CBP and population data from the Census Bureau).

Working Group, we determined that social associations and economic connectedness measured different aspects of social capital and would serve as better metrics for this predictor than the viable alternatives.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Census Bureau County Business Patterns series, and Population Estimation Program

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

Economic Connectedness Index

Economic connectedness measures the extent to which people with low socioeconomic status and people with high socioeconomic status are friends with each other. Put another way, it captures community members' exposure to friends with different levels of social capital. This metric is calculated as the share of high-income (above-median) friends among people with low incomes (below-median).

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This metric measures an important aspect of social capital: the extent to which members of a community associate with people with different social statuses. The connections made through this type of social capital help facilitate and develop a person's power, autonomy, and sense of belonging in their community. These data come from research that has been peer reviewed and recently published.[4]

- **Availability:** The metric is made available through Opportunity Insights' Social Capital Atlas.

- **Frequency:** These data were released in summer 2022. Because this was an inaugural data release contingent on the publication of new research, it is unclear whether it will be updated or with what frequency.

- **Geography:** The metric is available nationally in a standardized format for all counties. The smallest geography for which this metric is available is the zip-code level.

- **Consistency:** This metric is clearly defined and will be consistently measured across populations and geographies. We cannot know whether it will be consistently measured over time, because it is new and has yet to be updated.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric will help identify structural equity in the community by identifying the relative abundance or lack of social cohesion between community members with different levels of privilege and access to resources. These data do not contain demographic disaggregations.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric is a systemic condition of economic mobility because it speaks to what level of socioeconomic intermingling is supported in the social environment of a given area. This metric, however, is also an outcome of greater economic mobility, because were one's mobility from poverty to improve, so would their economic connectedness.

- **Limitations:** The biggest limitation of this metric is its novelty. Although it was developed by reputable scholars and peer reviewed, it lacks the established track record of other metrics. Moreover, it focuses on the financial aspects of social capital and does not capture other important elements, like popularity and community ties. This metric may be sensitive to residential mobility into and out of a city or county, but not to an extent likely to affect its aggregate values. This metric also relies on the continued popularity and use of Facebook as a

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[4] This metric is constructed using proprietary social media source data from Meta (previously known as Facebook). Social media profile information for individuals who use the Facebook platform is collected, anonymized, and analyzed to determine individual socioeconomic status as well as friendship circles and interconnectivity.

social media platform, the user base of which has been skewing older as time goes on. Without continued engagement from the same user groups and the introduction of younger populations as they age, comparability and consistency over time may be compromised. The metric is calculated only for zip codes containing at least 100 people.

Alternatives

See above.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2022

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- Opportunity Insights Social Capital Atlas

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

Values for this metric are now presented as the percentage of high-income friends among low-income people, instead of as a ratio reflecting the extent to which people of different socioeconomic statuses are friends with one another. The underlying data remain unchanged.

Opportunity-Rich and Inclusive Neighborhoods: Transportation Access

Access to transportation reduces barriers to employment, educational opportunities, health care, and child care, which can lead to economic success, a sense of power and autonomy, and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure transportation access using two metrics, the share of commuters who use public transit and the share of income spent on transportation, because not all places have public transit systems. The share of commuters who use public transit reflects the frequency of transit use for job access, while the share of income spent on transportation reflects the use of cars and other forms of nonpublic transportation with available cost information.

Share of Commuters Who Use Public Transit

This metric reflects a community's use of (and access to) public transportation. It is based on the share of commuters who use public transit among those in households earning 80 percent of the area median income. Only workers who do not work at home are considered commuters. The region is defined as the census core–based statistical area.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This metric is a share of commuters who use public transit among those in households making 80 percent of AMI. The latter is a common measure used for research and urban planning across public policy, real estate, and social service sectors.

- **Availability:** These data come from the Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index, developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), which provides downloadable transportation and housing datasets mapped across the United States.

- **Frequency:** These data have been updated periodically in the past (every few years, not annually). To date, there is no funding secured for a future update.

- **Geography:** These data are provided at the county and census tract or neighborhood levels.

- **Consistency:** This metric is calculated the same way over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric is based on households with moderate income in their region (80 percent of the AMI). This metric can also be disaggregated by subarea when used in combination with the American Community Survey to identify the racial or ethnic composition of neighborhoods (census tracts) with different levels of transportation access. We distinguish between census tracts that are majority nonwhite, those that have no majority race or ethnicity (mixed neighborhoods), and those that are majority non-Hispanic white. We define a majority as at least 60 percent of residents.

- **Structural relevance:** A measure of how many transit trips a moderate household takes helps to point out several systemic factors that affect predictors of upward mobility, such as access to jobs, access to educational opportunities (everything from school choice to extracurricular activities), time efficiency, community engagement and integration, and access to health services.

- **Limitations:** The racial breakdown we provide for these data is a proxy based on geography, as we do not have access to demographic information about the individual households represented in the data. Furthermore, this metric is based on households with moderate income in their region (80 percent of the AMI), which may overlook the needs and challenges faced by lower-income households. This is also only for a subset of people who are employed and commute to work, which will exclude people who work from home and those who are not employed. In addition, this metric is only about transportation to work and not about using public transit for other purposes (e.g., accessing health appointments, child care, and other activities). This metric alone cannot capture the concept of transportation access. This must be used in partnership with the transportation cost metric to more fully measure the concept of access.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered instead using a measure of the share of workers whose commute time is less than 15 minutes, a metric also used by the Opportunity Insights' Opportunity Atlas). However, this metric only covers a small share of the population because so few people now have such a short commute. This metric performs especially poorly for people using public transportation, who more often take more than 15 minutes for their commute. The American Community Survey offers many categories of commute times, but no other ones have been validated.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2022, 2019, 2015

- Categories: race/ethnicity

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- Center for Neighborhood Technology Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

We shifted from using a percentile-ranked transit trips index to using the share of commuters who use public transit. The new measure is easier to interpret and better reflects community members' perceptions of public transit availability.

Share of Income Spent on Transportation

This metric reflects how much households spend on both public transit and cars. It measures the percentage of income spent on transportation among an average household earning 80 percent of the area median income. These households have the regional average household size and average number of commuters per household. The region is defined as the census core–based statistical area.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This index is the percentage of income that a household making 80 percent of the AMI is spending on transportation. This is a common measure used for research and urban planning across public policy, real estate, and social service sectors.

- **Availability:** These data come from the Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index, developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, which provides clean and downloadable transportation and health datasets mapped across the United States.

- **Frequency:** These data have been updated periodically in the past (every few years, not annually). To date, it is uncertain whether future updates will be completed.

- **Geography:** These data are provided at the county and census tract or neighborhood levels.

- **Consistency:** This metric is calculated the same way over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric is based on households with moderate income in their region (80 percent of the AMI). This metric can also be disaggregated by subarea when used in combination with the American Community Survey to identify the racial or ethnic composition of neighborhoods (census tracts) with different levels of transportation access. We distinguish between census tracts that are majority nonwhite, those that have no majority race or ethnicity, and those that are majority non-Hispanic white. We define a majority as at least 60 percent of residents.

- **Structural relevance:** A measure of how much a moderate household spends on transit helps to point out several systemic factors that influence predictors of upward mobility, such as access to jobs, access to educational opportunities (everything from school choice to extracurricular activities), cost efficiency of transport, community engagement and integration, and access to health services.

- **Limitations:** The racial breakdown we provide for these data is a proxy based on geography, as we do not have access to demographic information about the individual households represented in the data. Furthermore, this metric is based on households with moderate

income in their region (80 percent of the AMI), which may overlook the needs and challenges faced by lower-income households, who may have experiences and barriers which may not be captured. Transportation costs may be low for a variety of reasons, including greater geographic proximity to public transportation and density of housing, services, and jobs in the neighborhood and surrounding community. It is important to consider this metric not by itself but rather in combination with the transit trips index to more fully measure the concept of transportation access.

Alternatives

The Working Group determined that two metrics of transportation access were necessary to accommodate the different transportation infrastructures in urban versus rural areas. The group also considered the transportation security index, but it would require original data collection, and only an 18-question version has been validated. The three-question version of the transportation security index, once validated, may be a viable metric in the future.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2022, 2019, 2015

- Categories: race/ethnicity

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- Center for Neighborhood Technology Housing and Transportation (H+T) Affordability Index

Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care: Access to Health Services

Regular health checkups help prevent illnesses, and access to health services is associated with reduced hospitalization. These resources support people's physical health and by extension their sense of power and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure access to health services using the number of people per primary care physician.

Number of People per Primary Care Physician

Primary care providers play central roles in the provision of health services. This metric represents the number of people served for each primary care physician in a community. It assumes the population is equally distributed across physicians and does not account for actual physician patient load. Primary care physicians include practicing nonfederal physicians (MDs and DOs) under 75 specializing in general practice medicine, family medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This metric is established and defined by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Workforce.

- **Availability:** Data for this metric are available nationally through the US Department of Health and Human Services' Area Health Resource File.[5]

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[5] The Area Health Resource File is a collection of data from more than 50 sources, including the American Medical Association, American Hospital Association, US Census Bureau, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,

- **Frequency:** Data are collected annually.

- **Geography:** These data are available at the county level.

- **Consistency:** This ratio can be measured in the same way across geographies and over time, but the definition of a primary care physician changed in 2013, so values before and after 2013 should not be compared.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The data cannot be broken down by demographic characteristics.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric measures the extent to which a community's residents have access to primary care physicians based on the presence of physicians in the community. As such, it is a structural feature of the community.

- **Limitations:** Because of financial and insurance constraints, the presence of physicians in an area does not mean that all local residents can access their services or that the care they access is of good quality. Conversely, physicians are not the only type of primary care provider available to patients. Nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other practitioners can also provide primary care services. This metric cannot be disaggregated by demographic groups and is therefore unable to speak to differences in access by race or ethnicity.

Alternatives

We considered measuring the share of the population with health insurance coverage, but that less directly captures access to health services than the selected metric. We also considered the rate at which preventive screening exams are used, but we could only identify a publicly available source that captured mammogram screenings for women on Medicare ages 65 to 74, which is only a small share of the population. We also considered a metric of preventable hospital stays based on hospitalizations for ambulatory-care-sensitive conditions, which are diagnoses that are usually treatable in outpatient settings. Although this is a widely used metric, it is limited to Medicare enrollees.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, and National Center for Health Statistics. The American Medical Association maintains the Physician Masterfile, which contains information on nearly all the Doctors of Medicine and Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine in the nation.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

- Categories: none

- City data are not available for this metric.

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Area Health Resources File (using 2021–22, 2022–23 files) (using American Medical Association Physician Masterfile)

Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care: Neonatal Health

Neonatal health problems have far-reaching effects. They can negatively affect children's cognitive and physical development and their academic performance, which can have unfavorable implications for their economic success in adulthood and sense of power and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure neonatal health using the share of infants with low birth weight.

Share of Infants with Low Birth Weight

Children with low birth weights face elevated risks for other future health problems. This metric reflects the share of infants born weighing less than 5 pounds 8 ounces (or 2,500 grams) out of all live births in a given community.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This metric is the standard currently used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of its national assessment on health among infants.

- **Availability:** Data on the share of children born with low birth weights are nationally available through the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available annually.

- **Geography:** County-level estimates are available through public-use microdata files provided by the National Center for Health Statistics and through other data-collection efforts, such as the Kids Count Data Center and the CDC WONDER system.

- **Consistency:** Medical advances have improved the outcomes for low-birth-weight babies, so this metric may change. However, it has been consistently used for decades as a metric for neonatal health.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The share of children born with low birth weights can be disaggregated by a number of maternal characteristics, including race or ethnicity, education, and age.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric points to systemic contributors to upward mobility, such as disparities in health care access, quality of health care, quality of maternal living conditions, and other social determinants of health.

- **Limitations:** Data are not readily available at lower levels of geography, such as neighborhoods, where disparities by race and socioeconomic status in a city are most notable. Large numbers of women with risky pregnancies moving into or out of a jurisdiction could affect this metric. Counties with populations under 100,000 people based on the decennial census are pooled into "Unidentified Counties" in the CDC WONDER data.

Alternatives

Besides low birth weight, the Working Group considered both the infant mortality rate and measures of maternal prenatal and postnatal care. It concluded that at the community level, the share of children born with low birth weights was more strongly associated with mobility from poverty than the infant mortality rate. Further, relative to low birth weight, the metrics for maternal prenatal and postnatal care, such as doctor's visits, receipt of prenatal counseling, breastfeeding services, and prenatal vitamin use, suffer from more measurement error and a weaker body of evidence tying them to later-life mobility.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016

- Categories: race/ethnicity, mother's education

- City data are not available for this metric.

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics, Natality data (via CDC WONDER)

Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care: Environmental Quality

Environments can affect people's health and well-being. Low environmental quality, such as poor air quality, extreme heat, vulnerability to disasters, and exposure to toxic wastes, can be barriers to upward mobility and exacerbate the burdens of poverty. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure environmental quality using an index of air quality.

Air Quality

This metric is a combination of standardized Environmental Protection Agency estimates of carcinogenic, respiratory, and neurological hazards in the air measured at the census-tract level. Values are inverted and then percentile-ranked nationally and range from 0 to 100.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** EPA scientists and researchers link levels of air pollutants to health effects that can manifest within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. For each of the pollutants, the EPA has established national air quality standards to protect public health.

- **Availability:** Air quality systems data are produced by the EPA and are publicly available.

- **Frequency:** Air quality information from the National Air Toxics Assessment data were updated every three years since 1996, but the most recent update was in 2014. It was succeeded by the Air Toxics Screening Assessment (AirToxScreen), that make data available annually.

- **Geography:** This metric is available at the neighborhood (census tract) level. Values can be averaged at higher levels of geography. For example, one can calculate a population-weighted average value among all census tracts in a county to determine a county-level value.

- **Consistency:** Levels of air pollutants can be consistently measured over time and space.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric can be disaggregated by subarea when used in combination with the American Community Survey to identify the racial or ethnic composition of neighborhoods (census tracts) with different levels of air quality. We distinguish between census tracts that are majority nonwhite, those that have no majority race or ethnicity, and those that are majority non-Hispanic white. We define a majority as at least 60 percent of residents.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric measures environmental quality for the whole community, which affects all residents.

- **Limitations:** The AirToxScreen data required making assumptions about the air toxics emissions data that go into it, and therefore the results are best applied to larger areas, and should not be used at the census tract level. The data are based on meteorological data and does not include indoor hazards, contracting or ingesting toxics and any other ways people might be exposed. The EPA continues to improve its air toxics screening assessments, and therefore users should use caution when comparing over time. The AirToxScreen data have a four-year lag in release.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered a measure of facilities that release high levels of toxic chemicals or pollution, but the number of sites was too limited to show meaningful differences from community to community. We also considered data on an air quality index reported by the EPA with more frequency than annually, but it only covers one-third of counties in the US.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2019, 2018, 2014

- Categories: race/ethnicity, income

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- US Environmental Protection Agency Air Toxics Screening Assessment data

- US Environmental Protection Agency National Air Toxics Assessment data

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata sample (via IPUMS)

- Missouri Census Data Center Geocorr 2022: Geographic Correspondence Engine

Healthy Environment and Access to Good Health Care: Safety from Trauma

Exposure to trauma can alter children's brain development and undermine their agency, capacity for interpersonal relationships, and self-esteem. It can also diminish the cognitive abilities children need to succeed in school and has been linked to low academic performance and long-term negative consequences later in life, all of which jeopardizes children's sense of power and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure safety from trauma using the number of deaths caused by injury per 100,000 people.

Deaths Caused by Injury per 100,000 People

Deaths caused by injury both reflect and cause trauma in a community. This metric includes planned deaths, such as homicides or suicides, and unplanned deaths, such as from motor vehicle and other accidents. Deaths caused by injury are counted by the deceased person's county of residence, not the county where the death occurred.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** These data are collected by the National Center for Health Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Injury can be traumatic, and people living in communities with a high incidence of injury can experience both the direct trauma from injury and vicarious trauma from injuries sustained by others, which can lead to psychological distress, increased rates of aggression, and diminished physical health. High rates of injuries that lead to death in

a community, such as opioid overdoses, suicides, traffic fatalities, and homicides, can lead to community-level trauma.

- **Availability:** Data for this metric are nationally available through the National Center for Health Statistics Mortality Files and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WONDER data.[6]

- **Frequency:** Data are collected annually.

- **Geography:** Data are available at the county level.

- **Consistency:** The metric can be measured in the same way across geographies and over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The metric can be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, age, gender, and education level.[7] Because this metric can be disaggregated by race and ethnicity, it can be used to see how much exposure to trauma varies between racial and ethnic groups within a community.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric is concerned with individual deaths, but deaths caused by injury can be reflective of both individual-level factors and structural factors such as neighborhood design, crime rates, and access to mental health services.

- **Limitations:** The metric captures only one aspect of exposure to trauma. Injury more generally would capture a larger aspect, but data on that are not nationally available. Data are not available at the city level.

Alternatives

We considered several other metrics, including rates of reported acts of child maltreatment (e.g., neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse) based on administrative data, frequent physical distress, frequent mental distress, emergency room visits, shootings, and survey-dependent scales. Those metrics were not chosen, either because they required original data collection or because the research evidence on their validity was weak.

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[6] The metric is also available through County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The program uses five-year averages of number of deaths and population counts, and it suppresses data for counties with fewer than 10 injury deaths for the period considered.

[7] Some disaggregation requires use of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention WONDER data.

PILLAR: HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT AND ACCESS TO GOOD HEALTH CARE

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014

  » Years available for disaggregated data: 2023, 2022, 2021

- Categories: race/ethnicity

- City data are not available for this metric.

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics, Mortality data, (via CDC WONDER)

Methodology Changes

May 2025 Update

For all years of data, we shifted from using age-adjusted mortality rates to crude mortality rates because of a lack of available data. More information on age-adjusted and crude rates can be found in CDC WONDER'S documentation.

Responsive and Just Governance: Political Participation

A key source of power at the individual and community levels stems from exercising political influence over decisions affecting the community. People who vote in presidential elections report feeling more empowered, enjoying greater life satisfaction, possessing a better sense of well-being, and having higher levels of self-rated health than nonvoters. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure political participation using the share of the voting-age population that turns out to vote.

Share of the Voting-Age Population Who Turns Out to Vote

Voter turnout is a well-established and broadly available reflection of political engagement. This metric measures the share of citizens who turn out to vote in presidential election years out of all citizens ages 18 and older (including citizens who may not be eligible to vote).

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** This metric is well established. Scholars of political science have used this metric in articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

- **Availability:** Data are reported by local governments and are available to the public.

- **Frequency:** New data for the metric are available at election cycles.

- **Geography:** Data are broadly available at the electoral district level.

- **Consistency:** Voter turnout is measured consistently over time and geography, but the values can be volatile from year to year, with higher turnouts in presidential election years, so we focus our metric on those years only.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** Voter turnout by race or ethnicity in a jurisdiction can be measured using different methods depending on the demographic balance of the jurisdiction. For diverse or integrated communities, ecological inference or rows by column inference is preferred. For less diverse or highly segregated communities, homogenous precinct analysis is preferred. Each is based on the census-defined racial and ethnic characteristics of the jurisdiction.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric measures community-level political engagement and behavior, not individual voting outcomes.

- **Limitations:** Residential mobility can affect this metric, so it is important to interpret changes in voter turnout in the context of demographic changes in the jurisdiction. In communities with large shares of immigrants, voter turnout can inaccurately reflect a community's political participation. Communities with large shares of immigrants who are not registered to vote could consider using additional local data to better assess political participation and civic engagement.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered self-reported measures of political participation, such as working in a political party or conducting some campaigning activity in the past 12 months. However, voter turnout more directly measures the predictor and has more readily available data.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2020, 2016

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology Election Data and Science Lab

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey, Citizen Voting Age Population Special Tabulation

Responsive and Just Governance: Descriptive Representation

Having local, elected officials with demographic characteristics (such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation) that broadly reflect their constituents' is correlated with greater political influence and engagement among otherwise underrepresented groups. Such representation supports people's sense of power and autonomy and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure descriptive representation using the ratio of the share of local, elected officials of a racial or ethnic group to the share of residents of the same group.

Ratio of the Share of Local, Elected Officials of a Racial or Ethnic Group to the Share of Residents of the Same Group

This metric is intended to capture the extent to which groups are represented by their community's elected leaders. Though we provide a community's shares of residents by racial and ethnic group (the denominator), we do not have data on the racial or ethnic makeup of local elected officials (the numerator). Communities will need to calculate these missing percentages to complete the descriptive representation metric. See our Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility in Your Community to learn how to collect the information needed to complete this metric.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Scholars of political science have used this metric in articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

- **Availability:** Data on the racial or ethnic characteristics of city councils or county boards can be collected locally. Communities should ask their local elected officials to self-report their racial or ethnic identities, and we recommend a process for collecting this information in our Planning Guide for Local Action. The racial and ethnic composition of residents in those communities can be calculated using data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

- **Frequency:** This metric can be updated as frequently as elections occur.

- **Geography:** This metric can be calculated at the city or county level.

- **Consistency:** This metric can be calculated the same way over time.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** This metric accounts for race and ethnicity in its definition, but it can also be calculated for other demographic categories.

- **Structural relevance:** This metric emphasizes collective representation across all elected officials rather than individual elected representatives.

- **Limitations:** Although the movement of people into and out of the jurisdiction can affect this metric, it is likely to be far more sensitive to shifts in the composition of elected officials in the short term. Collecting information on the demographic characteristics of a local official could be challenging if they do not reveal this information publicly and are unwilling to report it to local data collectors.

Alternatives

Because this metric aligns so well with the predictor, the Working Group did not seriously consider other metrics.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2021, 2018, 2016, 2014

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following source:

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey

Responsive and Just Governance: Safety from Crime

Safe neighborhoods, especially those safe from violent crime, are associated with positive psychological and educational outcomes, both of which support economic success. Research shows that people who believe crime is a major problem in their neighborhood experience more stress and depression than people who believe their neighborhood is safe. Unsafe neighborhoods negatively affect people's sense of power and autonomy and feelings of belonging. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure safety from crime using the numbers of reported property crimes and reported violent crimes per 100,000 people.

Numbers of Reported Property Crimes and Reported Violent Crimes per 100,000 People

This metric uses the numbers of reported property and violent crimes that local law enforcement agencies share with the FBI to illustrate community safety levels. Though the National Incident-Based Reporting System is the best national data source, the FBI cautions against using it to rank or compare communities, because numerous factors can cause the nature and types of crime to differ from place to place. Data for 2021 should be interpreted with caution because of limited agency participation rates in the National Incident-Based Reporting System.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** The NIBRS is the most widely used source for measuring and comparing reported crime across the country. The FBI provides definitions of each variable collected and provides technical specifications and a user manual.

- **Availability:** The metric can be constructed using data from the NIBRS, which is gaining increased participation from agencies across the country. As of 2021, agencies reporting to the NIBRS covered 66 percent of the US population. If a community is not included in the NIBRS, the relevant and comparable data can be requested by the public directly from their local law enforcement agencies or can be posted on their local law enforcement websites.

- **Frequency:** This metric can be updated annually.

- **Geography:** This metric is available at the county and city levels. The NIBRS data are reported at the agency level. Information about the cities and counties that an agency has jurisdiction over are available in the NIBRS data. Accordingly, the data can be aggregated across all agencies to other geographies.

- **Consistency:** The NIBRS data are consistent across the communities that provide data to the FBI, because the FBI defines the crimes included. Data may be accumulated and compiled differently at the local level. Before January 1, 2021, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program provided a standard, well-defined measure of crime. Reported crimes were captured for four "index" violent felonies (murder or nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and four index property felonies (burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson). The Uniform Crime Reporting program was retired on January 1, 2021, transitioning the national standard for crime statistics to the NIBRS to improve crime measures nationally. The NIBRS offers greater specificity in reporting offenses, includes more detailed information, and provides context for specific crime problems.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations:** The NIBRS data include demographic information about the age, race, and gender of victims and person suspected of committing the offense. However, demographics in these data are unreliable. Additionally, those not directly affected by a crime can still be negatively affected by general exposure to crime. Looking at differences in crime rates by neighborhood demographics can illustrate whether there are racial disparities in exposure to crime. The NIBRS data do not include neighborhood-level information necessary for this analysis, but local law enforcement agencies have anonymized geocoded incident-level data and some agencies share this data publicly on government websites. The Urban Institute's Spatial Equity Data Tool can be used for this analysis.

- **Structural relevance:** Levels of crime can be reflective of structural factors such as poverty rates, educational access, access to mental health services, and even neighborhood design.

- **Limitations:** Reporting to the NIBRS is not mandatory, and although most communities provide data, the NIBRS does not capture the universe of reported crimes across the US. The NIBRS measures crime reported to the police, so unreported crime is not captured in these data. An FBI analysis estimated that up to half of violent crime goes unreported to the local police, and research finds that some neighborhoods are less likely to report violent crime, especially where trust of police is low. As a place-based measure, reported crime is affected by mobility in and out of the community. Crime rates are based on the number of incidents per 100,000 residents. If the number of residents increases and crime remains constant, the crime rate could go down without any change in the number of reported incidents. Also, because crime tends to be concentrated in certain areas, if new residents are moving to places where crime rates are already low, the populations and areas experiencing the most crime may not see any change even if citywide rates decrease. Relatedly, the NIBRS does not provide data on crime at the neighborhood level, so it cannot track changes in crime or compare different places within a community. The NIBRS reports data at the agency level and some agencies may have jurisdiction in multiple counties and cities. Similarly, multiple law enforcement agencies (e.g., state, county, city, university, tribal) can fall within a single county. Because of this, at the county level, crime counts may be underestimated in counties where some agency data are missing.

Alternatives

The Working Group also considered using self-reported victimization to measure exposure to crime. Although it is widely understood that a large share of crimes go unreported, self-reported victimization is only available at the national level through the National Crime Victimization Survey, so local jurisdictions would therefore need to administer the survey to gain local-level data. Jurisdictions could also consider supplementing NIBRS data with local data to improve their relevance to local policymaking.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021

- Categories: none

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- Federal Bureau of Investigations, National Incident-Based Reporting System (in Jacob Kaplan's 2025 Offense Segment)

- US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey

Responsive and Just Governance: Just Policing

Overly punitive policing, such as excessive traffic and other stops for suspected violations, is associated with increased anxiety and lower levels of upward mobility among victims of such policing. More equitable policing practices are an important contributor to people's economic success and their sense of power and autonomy. Learn more about the evidence linking this predictor to upward mobility here.

We measure just policing using the number of juvenile arrests per 100,000 juveniles.

Juvenile Arrests per 100,000 Juveniles

Arrests among young people provide a strong indicator of elevated criminal legal system involvement and overpolicing. This metric reflects arrests of juveniles (people ages 10 to 17) for any crime or offense status. Because individuals can be arrested multiple times, the data report the number of arrests, not the number of individuals arrested. Though the National Incident-Based Reporting System is the best national data source, the FBI cautions against using it to rank or compare communities, because numerous factors can cause the nature and types of crime to differ from place to place. Data for 2021 should be interpreted with caution because of limited local law enforcement agency participation rates in the National Incident-Based Reporting System.

Criteria Used to Assess This Metric

We used eight criteria, described in the introduction, to select metrics to measure this predictor. Selected metrics may not necessarily meet all eight criteria. We assessed each metric according to the data that are available from original identified sources. This may not correspond to what we provide in the Mobility Metrics (see "Available Data" below). This metric's performance on the eight criteria is as follows:

- **Validity:** Although arrest behavior among the total population may be confounded by many factors, arrests among juvenile offenders can be more closely tied to overly punitive policing behavior. Research finds that juvenile suspects are more likely to be arrested than adult suspects, after controlling for a suspect's race, gender, the seriousness of the offense, and the

amount of evidence.[8] Research also finds that juvenile justice system involvement has large and disruptive effects on adult outcomes; juvenile detention is associated with lower educational attainment, lower rates of employment, and higher rates of criminal offending and incarceration in adulthood.[9]

- **Availability:** The metric can be constructed using data from the NIBRS, which is gaining increased participation from agencies across the country. As of 2021, agencies reporting to the NIBRS covered 66 percent of the US population. If a community is not included in the NIBRS, the relevant and comparable data can be requested by the public directly from their local law enforcement agencies or may be posted on their local law enforcement websites.

- **Frequency:** This metric can be updated annually. Juvenile arrest data are available annually through the FBI. Arrest data before 2014 can be found on the Bureau of Justice Statistics Arrest Data tool.

- **Geography:** This metric is available at the county and city levels. The NIBRS data are available at the agency level, which can be aggregated to other geographies.

- **Consistency**: These data are consistent across the communities that provide data to the FBI, because the FBI defines the crimes included in the index and defines juveniles as people between ages 10 and 17 regardless of state definitions.

- **Structural equity and disaggregations**: This metric necessarily measures people in a particular age group but also provides arrest-level data including race or ethnicity and gender as well as age. Ethnicity data are inconsistently collected and frequently missing.

- **Structural relevance**: This metric is concerned with juvenile arrests, but arrests can be reflective of both individual-level factors and structural factors such as neighborhood design, poverty rates, education access, and access to mental health services.

- **Limitations**: Reporting to the NIBRS is not mandatory, and although most communities are covered by NIBRS data, the NIBRS does not capture the universe of reported crimes across the US. As a place-based measure, levels of arrests are affected by mobility into and out of the

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[8] Robert A. Brown, Kenneth J. Novak, and James Frank, "Identifying Variation in Police Officer Behavior between Juveniles and Adults," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 37, no. 2 (2009): 200–08, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2009.02.004.

[9] Anna Aizer and Joseph J. Doyle, "Juvenile Incarceration, Human Capital, and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly Assigned Judges," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130, issue 2 (2015): 759–803, https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjv003.

community, and because the measure is a rate, large increases or decreases in the number of people younger than 18 in an area could also affect the metric.

Alternatives

The Working Group considered several metrics to measure overly punitive policing, including community trust in law enforcement, adult incarceration rates, arrest rates, and police stop rates. However, rates of juvenile arrests were not only publicly available but were also more likely to occur in juveniles' jurisdictions of residence (because data on stops would likely include stops for people who reside elsewhere). A person's age at the time of arrest is an important consideration because adolescence is an influential state of life and being arrested in adolescence has high predictive power of whether arrests reoccur in adulthood, along with other negative life outcomes.

Available Data

We provide the following years and category disaggregations on the Upward Mobility Data Dashboard (the Mobility Metrics data can also be downloaded from the Urban Institute's Data Catalog or from our public GitHub repository):

- Years: 2023, 2022, 2021

- Categories: race, age, gender

Data used to calculate this metric come from the following sources:

- Federal Bureau of Investigations, National Incident-Based Reporting System (in Jacob Kaplan's 2025 Arrestee Segment), Harvard Dataverse V1US Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey

About the Authors

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