POVERTY INDICATORS
STATE OF MICHIGAN

Getting an accurate picture of poverty in a county is challenging - many data points could represent the breadth and depth of poverty on the county level. In fact, while a county level report can shed some light on the state of poverty in Michigan, it obscures some of the nuances that appear county-to-county.

This map focuses on eight broad poverty-related indicators (unless otherwise noted, they are pulled from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey):

- **Population:** Broadly speaking, the higher a population of a county, the more economic opportunity that there will be. Population is a good way to make sure you're comparing similarly sized counties in terms of poverty.

- **Median Income:** In talking about poverty, researchers typically use median income (and not average income) to demonstrate the typical income of a household in that county. Medians are less susceptible to outliers – for example, if just a few households had a very high income, it could make the county's mean income look much higher.

- **Poverty Rate**: This is the percent of the population below the federal poverty line.
  - Interested in learning more about the federal poverty line and how it's calculated? See our primer here.

- **Child Poverty Rate**: This is the percent of children under 18 who are in households under the poverty line.

- **Percent ALICE:** ALICE is an indicator developed by the United Way. It stands for: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE is a way to get a snapshot of the working poor, a group that's not captured in the percent below the poverty rate. See the full United Way project here.

- **Percent on SNAP:** SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, is the country's most robust social safety net program. It is one of very few programs that families who apply and qualify are guaranteed to receive. All funding for SNAP comes from the federal government.

- **Male and Female Life Expectancy:** Life expectancy is a good proxy for overall health of the region – the better the lifetime health of individuals and the better the access to

healthcare, the longer the life expectancy. This indicator is from the [CDC community health indicators](#).

- **Percent Single-Parent Households:** According to Raj Chetty and his co-authors, "the fraction of children living in single-parent households is the single strongest correlate of upward income mobility". They explored 5 variables in a [recent study](#) on upward mobility. There is a strong relationship between the percent of single parent households and a lack of social mobility in a region. This indicator is pulled from the [Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings.](#)

If you're interested in seeing a complete list of indicators available through Poverty Solutions, click [here](#).

Data Sources:
All data sources are publicly available. While we've given a snapshot of the data we believe is important as it relates to poverty on the county level, there are many more indicators to access [here](#).

[American Community Survey:](#)
The American Census Survey (ACS) is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and is updated yearly. The numbers reflect surveyed samples from across the United States that ultimately give us estimates of the entire region without surveying everyone. These estimates were pulled from the American Census Survey's database, American FactFinder. This data represents the most up-to-date estimation of these values.

Note: For larger counties, the indicator is based on the 2016 one-year estimation of the value. For smaller regions, we use what's called a "rolling estimate" that allows for statistical precision in small samples by using data from over time. For counties smaller than 65,000, all data is the 2012-2016 five year estimate.

Values from ACS: Population, Median Age, White Alone, Median Income, Unemployed, Not in Labor Force, With Supplemental Security Income, With Cash Public Assistance Income, With Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits, Employed/With Public Coverage, Unemployed/With Public Coverage, Not in Labor Force/With Public Coverage, No Health Insurance Coverage, Percentage Below Poverty Level, Under 18 Years Below, Poverty Level, Owner Occupied, and Renter Occupied.

[Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program](#)
The U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program has one-year estimates for poverty at a county level. This data is used for a reliable 1-year estimate of poverty rates for even small counties. The below indicators are from the SAIPE data from 2016.

Values from SAIPE: Poverty Rate, Child Poverty Rate, Median Income

The United Way's ALICE (Asset limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report provides us with a more detailed look at the economic hardships families face in the United States. This population may be overlooked because they fall above the Federal Poverty Line, which is the cut-off that many data use as "poor". The ALICE number can be viewed as the number of "working poor" in a region. The data in this set are pulled from the United Way's last report in 2014.

CDC Community Health Indicators:
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Community Health Status Indicators provide county-level data on important demographic, social, and economic indicators. Male and Female Life Expectancy values were taken from this data.

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute release health-related data at the county-level through a project called County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. From their website, "The annual *County Health Rankings* measure vital health factors, including high school graduation rates, obesity, smoking, unemployment, access to healthy foods, the quality of air and water, income inequality, and teen births in nearly every county in America. The annual *Rankings* provide a revealing snapshot of how health is influenced by where we live, learn, work and play." The indicators used on the map are from the 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation data.

Disparities in Michigan: A Broad View Across Indicators

Population:
- There are eight counties with fewer than 10,000 people in them, and only two with more than a million (Wayne and Oakland).
    - Six of the eight least populated counties are on the Upper Peninsula, where the most populated county, Marquette, has just over 66,000 people, ranking it 29/83 counties.

Median Income:
- Wayne County, often thought of as one of the low-income hubs of the state due to its association with Detroit, has a median income of over $43,000. This is higher than 31 other counties.
- The lowest household median income is $33,708 in Lake County.
- The highest median income is $79,388 in Livingston county.

Percent below poverty:

- Livingston County has the lowest poverty rate (and highest median income), at 5.8%.
- Only one county out-ranks Wayne county's poverty rate - Isabella.
- Seven of the top ten highest median income counties also are in the ten counties with the lowest poverty rate. They mostly what can be classified as primarily suburban counties: Livingston, Leelenau, Oakland, Clinton, Ottawa, Monroe and Macomb.

Under 18 below poverty:
- Lake County, where the adult poverty rate is 21.9% - the third highest in the state - has a child poverty rate of over 40%.
- Three counties on the top 10 highest child poverty rate are not on the top 10 overall poverty rate: Lake, Clare and Crawford.

ALICE:
- Only two counties on the top 10 poverty rate list are also on the highest percentage of ALICE - suggesting that while there are fewer individuals in poverty in those counties, there are a lot of struggling individuals.
- Using the ALICE report data, there are three counties where the percentage of people in poverty plus the percent ALICE is more than 50%: Clare, Isabella, and Lake. There are only two counties below 30%: Livingston and Leelenau.

Life expectancy:
- The lowest life expectancy is Wayne County, home to Detroit, at 72.2 years and the highest is Leelanau county at 80.4. Kent County, which is home to Grand Rapids, has a life expectancy of 77.5 years.
    - The largest county, Wayne County, has an average male life expectancy of 72.2 years.
    - The fourth largest county, with the largest population outside of the Southeast Michigan region, Kent County, has an average male life expectancy of 77.5 years. Wayne County's female life expectancy is 78, and Kent's is 81.7.

SNAP
- Lowest SNAP: Clinton County, 5.2%
- Highest SNAP: Wayne County: 24.1%

Complete List of Indicators Currently Available:
Poverty Solutions is happy to discuss the creation of tailored maps if there are specific sub-categories of data that an organization may be interested in. We are also able to incorporate new sets of data into our existing dataset.

The below variables are visible in this spreadsheet.

Some example custom maps could focus on:
Housing Focused:
- Percent Owner-Occupied Units
- Percent Renter-Occupied Units
- Vacancy Rate

Child Focused:
- Child Poverty Rate
- Percent Free and Reduced Lunch
- Children on Public Health Insurance

Health Focused:
- Overall Percent with Public Coverage
- Unemployed with Public Coverage
- Employed with Public Coverage
- Adult Obesity Rate

For more information, or to request specific data, please contact povertysolutions@umich.edu.

Data Sources

	Data Source		Data Source
County Name	ACS	Food Environment Index	RWJF
Population	ACS	% Physically Inactive	RWJF
Median Age	ACS	% Access to exercise opportunities	RWJF
White Alone	ACS	% Excessive Drinking	RWJF
Median Income	ACS	% Driving Deaths that are Alcohol-Impaired	RWJF
Unemployed	ACS	Chlamydia Rate: Chlamydia cases / Population * 100,000	RWJF
Not in Labor Force	ACS	Teen Birth Rate: Teen births / females ages 15-19 * 1,000	RWJF
With Supplemental Security Income	ACS	% Uninsured	RWJF
With Cash Public Assistance Income	ACS	Primary Care Physician Ratio	RWJF
With Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits	ACS	Dentist Ratio	RWJF
Employed/With Public Coverage	ACS	Mental Health Providers Ratio	RWJF
Unemployed/With Public Coverage	ACS	Preventable Hosp. Rate: 'Discharges for Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions/Medicare Enrollees * 1,000	RWJF

Not in Labor Force/With Public Coverage	ACS	% Receiving HbA1c: 'Percentage of diabetic Medicare enrollees receiving HbA1c test	RWJF
No Health Insurance Coverage	ACS	% Mammography: Percentage of female Medicare enrollees having at least 1 mammogram in 2 yrs (age 67-69)	RWJF
Percentage Below Poverty Level	ACS	High School Graduation Rate	RWJF
Under 18 Years Below Poverty Level	ACS	% Some College	RWJF
Owner Occupied	ACS	80th Percentile Income	RWJF
Renter Occupied	ACS	20th Percentile Income	RWJF
Poverty Rate	United Way	Income inequality: Income Ratio	RWJF
ALICE Adults (Asset Limited, Income Constrained)	United Way	% Single-Parent Households	RWJF
Above ALICE	United Way	# Associations	RWJF
Male Life Expectancy	CDC Community Health	Association Rate: Associations / Population * 10,000	RWJF
Female Life Expectancy	CDC Community Health	Violent Crime Rate: 'Violent crimes/population * 100,000	RWJF
Premature Death: Years of Potential Life Lost Rate	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)	Injury Death Rate: 'Injury mortality rate per 100,000	RWJF

% Poor or fair health	RWJF	Average daily amount of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter	RWJF
Poor physical health days	RWJF	Drinking water violation in county	RWJF
Poor mental health days	RWJF	% Severe Housing Problems	RWJF
Percent Low Birthweight	RWJF	% Drive Alone to work	RWJF
% Adult Smokers	RWJF	% Long Commute - Drives Alone	RWJF
% Adult Obesity	RWJF	Percent of Students Eligible for Free & Reduced Price Lunch	Kids Count