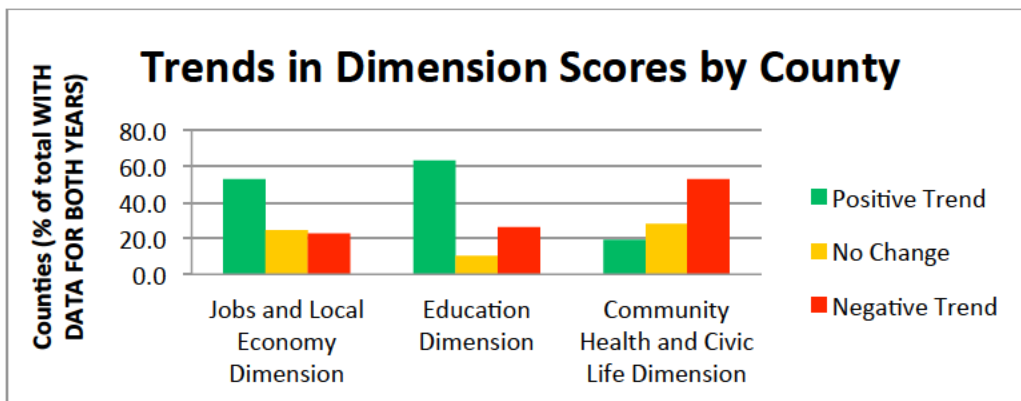
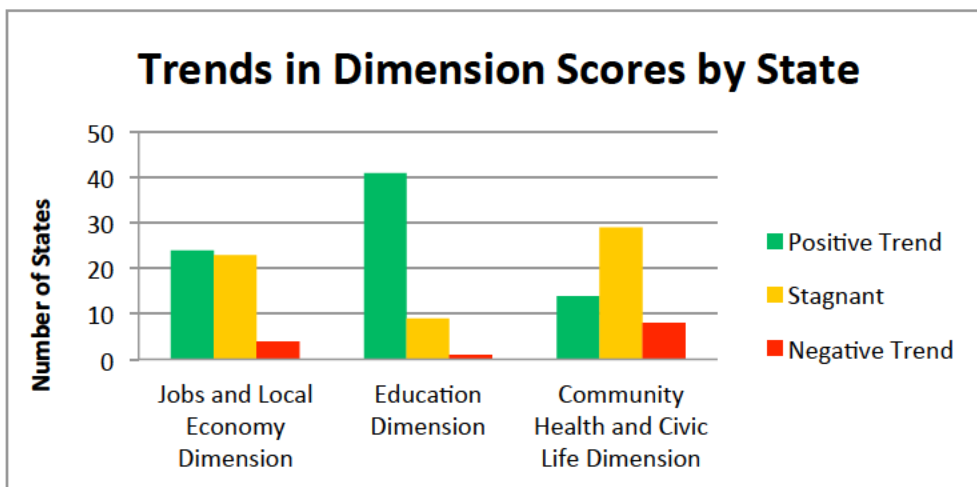


Opportunity Index 2013 Summary of Findings for States and Counties

The average Opportunity Score in the US has increased from 49.6 in 2011 and 50.0 in 2012 to 50.9 in 2013. In addition, between 2011 and 2013, a majority of states and counties improved their Opportunity Scores (states) and Opportunity Grades (counties).

Overall, most states and counties improved or maintained their scores in the Jobs and Local Economy Dimension and Education Dimension; progress was weakest overall in the Community Health and Civic Life Dimension. Among the states, West Virginia experienced the most significant decline in community health and civic life by far. See tables below.



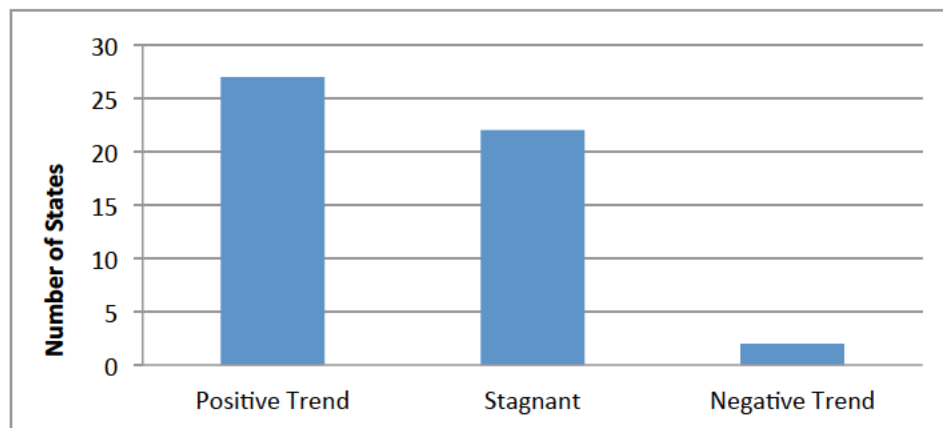
Among both states and counties, the **percent of youth not in school and not working** and the **percent of the population below the poverty line** are the two indicators most significantly correlated with

changes in the Opportunity Index. As youth disconnection and poverty climb, the Opportunity Index tumbles. For both states and counties, the two variables least correlated with the Opportunity Index are the percent of households spending less than 30 percent of income on housing and the percent of young children enrolled in preschool.

STATE PROGRESS AND SETBACKS

Overall, 27 states saw an increase in their scores since 2011, and only two states, Connecticut and New Mexico, saw declines in their scores between 2011 and 2013. The scores of twenty-two states remained essentially unchanged over this period (see below).

Change in State Opportunity Scores from 2011 to 2013



Connecticut, Hawaii, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia experienced the most dramatic shifts in position. The District of Columbia was the region that gained the most, improving by seven positions, from 29 to 22. On the other hand, Connecticut tumbled in the state rankings ten places between 2011 and 2013, from three to thirteen. Hawaii and West Virginia experienced similarly disheartening changes, both falling seven positions in the rankings. Opportunity Scores in Hawaii and West Virginia remained essentially unchanged during this time period but both states fell in the state ranking because other states improved their scores and moved up the rankings.

The District of Columbia led the nation in terms of positive growth in two of the three dimensions of the Opportunity Score—jobs and local economy and education. DC experienced consistent improvement in the vast majority of variables within each of these dimensions, including a small but significant increase in wages and a notable improvement of 3.2 percentage points in preschool attendance. Particularly significant was the finding that DC, which is counted among the states, experienced a slight decrease in inequality over the past three years (the only state to do so), and a 4.2 percentage point increase in the percentage of the population with an associate’s degree or higher, almost double the increase of any other state. DC also experienced a small decrease in its score on the community health and civic life dimension, but this decrease was overshadowed by gains in the other dimensions of the Opportunity Index. One notable finding is that in the District of Columbia, the percentage of 3 and 4-year olds enrolled in preschool is greater than the percentage of students who graduate high school on-time.

What are some factors that have contributed to the decline in conditions for opportunity in Connecticut? Connecticut lost ground between 2011 and 2013 on all three dimensions of the Opportunity Score—jobs and local economy, education, and community health and civic life. In both the economic and social dimensions, Connecticut was among the ten states that saw the greatest declines in these areas between 2011 and 2013. The area in which Connecticut unfortunately stands out is education. The state's negative change in the Education Score between 2011 and 2013 is more than seven times that of the state with the second-greatest decrease. This change is due in large part to the huge erosion in the on-time high school graduation rate in the state, which declined from 82.2 percent to 75.1. It is important to remember though that Connecticut's 2013 education dimension score, while decreasing since 2011, still places the state 11th in the nation, a strong showing. Connecticut may not be doing as well as it has done in the past, but its residents are still doing much better than the majority of Americans nationwide.

While North Dakota ranks as the state with the fourth lowest percentage of preschool attendance in 2013, the state performs very well on all other variables and therefore earns a ranking of third in the overall Opportunity Score. It is notable that North Dakota not only performs very well on economic indicators, such as unemployment rate, access to banking institutions, and affordable housing, but even in the two other indicators in the education dimension. Preschool attendance levels are, in fact, not highly correlated with other variables relating to education and it is notable that, although North Dakota has a very low percentage of preschool enrollments, the state enjoys the third highest percentage of on-time high school graduation in the nation. The question of why preschool enrollment is so low in North Dakota could be an interesting subject for future research.

Nevada seems to be anomalous when looking at the relationship between Opportunity Score and poverty. While it ranks last in the overall state rankings, it enjoys a much lower poverty level than states with comparative ratings. Mississippi, for example, rank fiftieth in terms of Opportunity Score, one better than Nevada, but suffers from a poverty level almost 7 percentage points greater than the Western state. For many of the variables, the data from Nevada reverses the trends apparent in the data from other states. For example, while Opportunity Score generally decreases as median household income diminishes, median household income in Nevada is almost \$12,000 more than that of the second lowest ranked state, Mississippi. Nevada fared the worst among the states in four of the sixteen independent variables in 2013, more than any other state. Nevada suffers from 9.5 percent unemployment, a low 31.9 percent preschool enrollment, 57.8 percent on-time high school graduation, and only 28.1 percent of adults involved in social, civic, sports, and religious groups. Nevada trails far behind the other states in terms of both education, and community health and civic life. Higher incomes do not appear to be fostering other aspects of access to opportunity in Nevada.

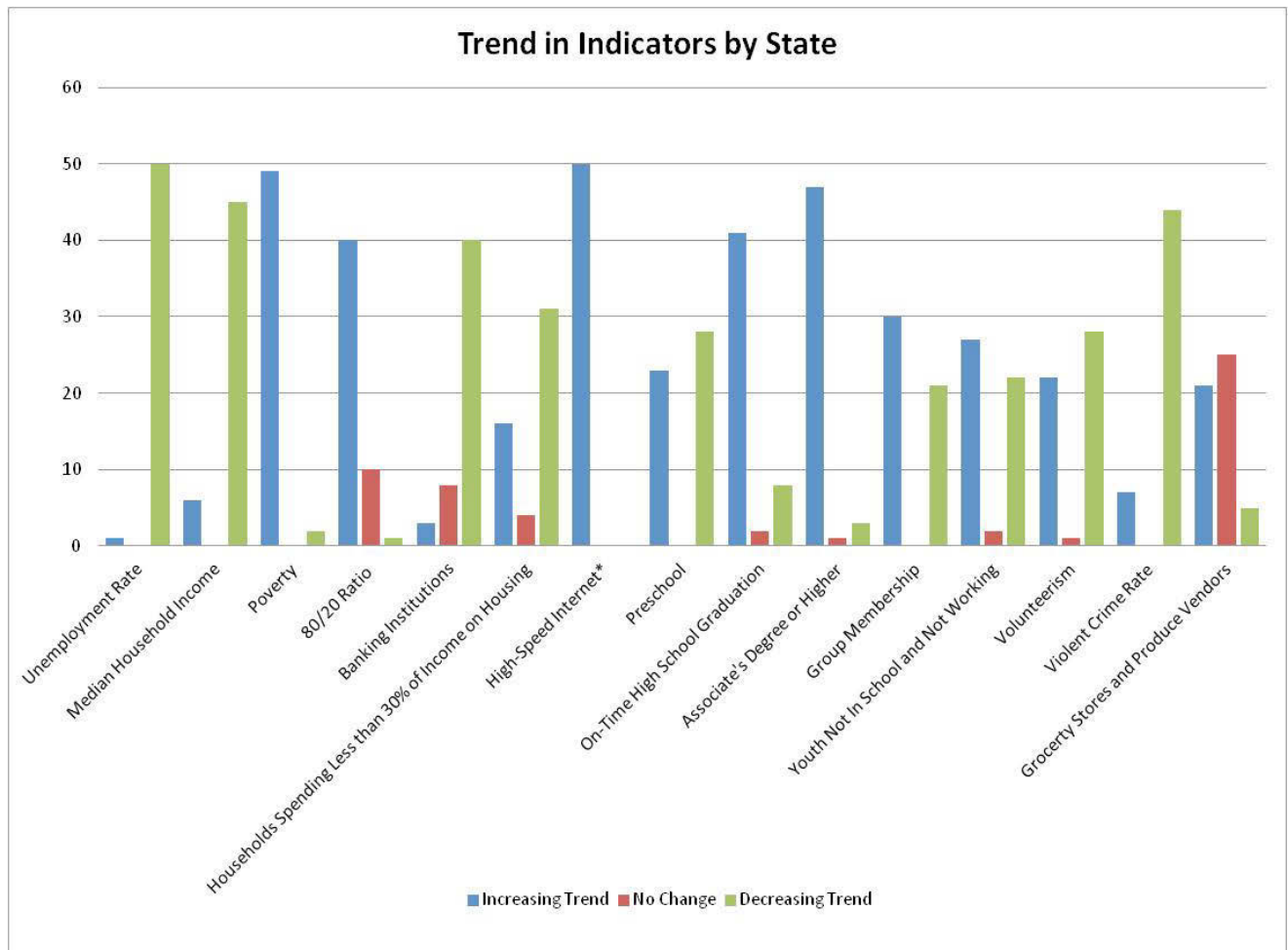
South Dakota stands out in terms of high-speed Internet access because this indicator has increased more rapidly between 2011 and 2013 in this state than in those states with comparable Opportunity Scores. Internet access is the only variable that increased across the board between 2011 and 2013.

Although the top-ranked state of Vermont ranks well along all three categories—jobs and local economy, education, and community health and civic life—it particularly stands out regarding community health and civil life. It's score of 77.88 is more than 8 points higher than its nearest competitor in this dimension—Minnesota. Compare this with the difference between the scores of the first and second ranked state in the other two categories; for jobs and local economy, North Dakota leads New Hampshire by nearly 3 points, and, in education, New Jersey leads Vermont by just over one point.

North Dakota is the only state that saw an increase, albeit a minor one, in unemployment between 2013 and 2011. This is likely because the employment rate is already the lowest in the country, 3.5 percent, half the national average, and it is unlikely that a rate already so much lower than that of the rest of the country would fall further. In addition, North Dakota's low unemployment rate may have attracted new job-seekers from elsewhere, and their arrival could have increased the jobless rate.

Between 2011 and 2013, a few of the indicators used to calculate the Opportunity Score shifted dramatically. The national unemployment rate, for example, shrank by over 20 percent of its 2011 value over the course of these years. The violent crime rate also diminished and was reduced by about a tenth during this period. Not all significant shifts were for the better though; the percentage of Americans below the poverty line increased by almost 12 percent of its 2011 value, from 14.3 percent to 15.9 percent.

The table below shows how each of the different indicators changed at the state level from the 2011 Opportunity Index to the 2013 Index.



Occasionally, questions come up with regard to opportunity by region. The table below shows the number of states in each region that saw improvements, backsliding, or stayed the same on each of the indicators that make up the Opportunity Index. Due to the differences in state population size, it is not possible to create an “average” by region.

Indicator	Direction	Northeast	South	West	Midwest	Nationwide
Opportunity Score*	Increasing	3	11	8	5	27
	No Change	5	6	4	7	22
	Decreasing	1	0	1	0	2
Unemployment	Increasing	0	0	0	1	1
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	9	17	13	11	50
Median Household Income	Increasing	0	1	1	3	5
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	9	16	12	9	46
Poverty	Increasing	9	17	12	11	49
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	0	0	1	1	2
80/20 Ratio	Increasing	8	14	10	8	40
	No Change	1	2	3	4	10
	Decreasing	0	1	0	0	1
Banking Institutions	Increasing	1	0	0	1	2
	No Change	4	1	0	3	8
	Decreasing	4	16	13	8	41
Households Spending Less than 30% of Income on Housing	Increasing	1	5	5	4	15
	No Change	2	0	1	1	4
	Decreasing	6	12	7	7	32
High-Speed Internet	Increasing	9	17	12	12	50
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	0	0	0	0	0
Jobs and Local Economy*	Increasing	1	9	6	8	24
	No Change	6	7	6	4	23
	Decreasing	2	1	1	0	4

Indicator	Direction	Northeast	South	West	Midwest	Nationwide
Preschool	Increasing	3	5	8	6	22
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	6	12	5	6	29
On-Time HS Graduation	Increasing	7	15	10	9	41
	No Change	1	0	0	1	2
	Decreasing	1	2	3	2	8
Associate's Degree or Higher	Increasing	9	15	11	12	47
	No Change	0	1	0	0	1
	Decreasing	0	1	2	0	3
Education Dimension*	Increasing	6	15	10	10	41
	No Change	2	2	3	2	9
	Decreasing	1	0	0	0	1
Group Membership	Increasing	6	9	7	8	30
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	3	8	6	4	21
Youth Not in School and Not Working	Increasing	5	10	5	7	27
	No Change	0	2	0	0	2
	Decreasing	4	5	8	5	22
Volunteerism	Increasing	3	8	8	3	22
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	6	9	5	9	29
Violent Crime Rate	Increasing	4	1	1	1	7
	No Change	0	0	0	0	0
	Decreasing	5	16	12	11	44
Grocery Store and Produce Vendors	Increasing	3	1	0	1	5
	No Change	5	6	6	8	25
	Decreasing	1	10	7	3	21
Community Health and Civic Life*	Increasing	2	3	5	4	14

	No Change	7	11	6	5	29
	Decreasing	0	3	2	3	8

* "No Change" indicates a difference of less than +/- 1.0 between years for the Opportunity Index and dimension subscores. Otherwise, no change means a difference of 0.0 between years.

COUNTY PROGRESS AND SETBACKS

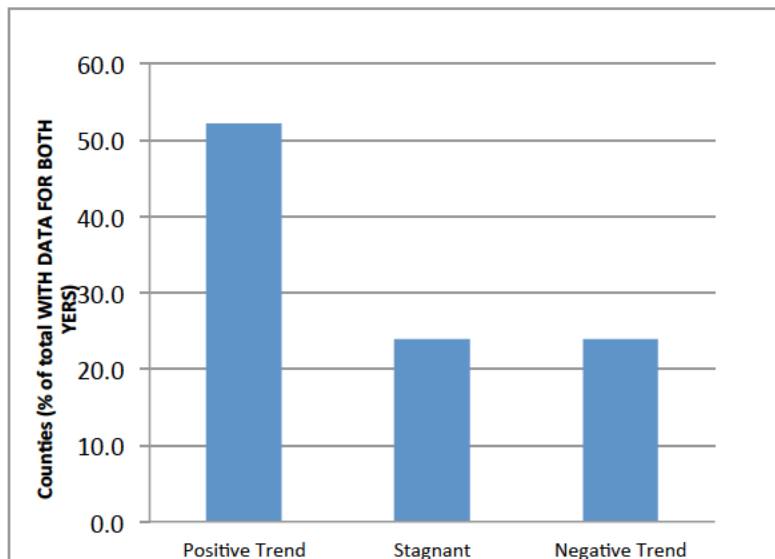
Overall, 52.2 percent of counties experienced positive growth in their Opportunity Grades between 2011 and 2013. 23.9 percent of counties nationwide have experienced no significant change, and 23.9 percent have suffered a decline in Opportunity Grade (see Chart 1). C, which represents average or typical performance, was the most common Index score for counties in all three years. 21.20 percent of counties had a rating of C in 2013, 20.93 percent in 2012, and 18.44 percent in 2011.

Interestingly, a sharp decline in any one of the three main categories of the Index is not strongly correlated to a decline in another one of these categories. None of the ten counties that experienced the most drastic decrease in one of these three categories did so in another.

The highest scoring county was again Falls Church City, VA, the only A+ in the pack. Lowest marks went to Lowndes County, Alabama, one of only four counties to receive an F in 2013. The differences between these counties are stark. The median household income differs by almost \$90,000, on-time graduation rates are 37 percentage points higher, and there are nearly 400 fewer violent crimes per 100,000 people in Falls Church City than in Lowndes County.

Roosevelt County, Montana and Polk County, Tennessee book end America's counties regarding changes in opportunity between 2011 and 2013. Roosevelt County saw the greatest decline of any county nationwide, losing a full 11.6 points and falling from a score of B- in 2011 to C- in 2013. Polk County, Tennessee experienced a very different kind of transformation. Between these two years, the county improved 15.0 points, from a D to a C+.

Percent Change in County Opportunity Grade from 2011 to 2013



Some county trends related to change since 2011 within states are the following:

- Virginia was the state with the greatest difference in the 2013 Opportunity Scores between two counties—Falls Church City and Brunswick County (81.70 and 34.25 respectively); Delaware was home to the smallest difference between its top-ranked and bottom-ranked counties—Kent County and New Castle County (44.90 and 53.20 respectively).
- Counties in only nine states—South Carolina, Iowa, Kentucky, Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Georgia, Mississippi, and Kansas—make up all 50 locales that lost the most ground in terms of youth neither employed nor in school over the years. Texas alone saw the most significant setbacks; it makes up 50 percent of these counties.
- In eight states—Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and South Carolina—the unemployment rate decreased in every single county between 2011 and 2013. There was no state in which the unemployment rate increased across the board.

The counties with the top and bottom scores on each of the indicators are listed in the table below.

Top and Bottom County Scorecard

INDICATOR	UNITED STATES	TOP COUNTY	BOTTOM COUNTY
Unemployment Rate (percent)	7.1 percent	0.9 percent, Williams, Billings, and Slope counties, North Dakota	30.3 percent, Yuma County, Arizona
Median Household Income (\$)	\$48,958	\$116,652, Falls Church City, Virginia	\$18,752, Owsley County, Kentucky
Poverty (percent of population below poverty line)	15.9 percent	3.4 percent, Loudoun County, Virginia	53.5 percent, Shannon County, South Dakota
80/20 Ratio (ratio of household income of 80th percentile to that of 20th percentile)	4.9	2.3, Logan and Blaine counties, Nebraska	8.5, New York County (Manhattan), New York
Banking Institutions (commercial banks, savings institutions, and credit unions per 1,000 residents)	4.0 per 1,000 residents	32.8, Loup County, Nebraska	0.0, 35 counties nationwide
Households Spending	62.2 percent	43.7, Miami-Dade	90.6, Eureka County,

Less than 30 percent of Income on Housing (percent)		County, Florida	Nevada
High-Speed Internet (5-level categories)	N/A	Category 5, 152 counties nationwide	Category 1, 37 counties nationwide
Preschool Enrollment (percent ages 3 and 4 in school)	47.4 percent	100.0 percent, Ouray County, Colorado; Worth County, Missouri; Mineral County, Nevada; Galax City, Virginia; Bedford City, Virginia; Stonewall County, Texas; Hinsdale County, Colorado, Haines Borough, Alaska; Skagway Municipality, Alaska; San Juan County, Colorado	3.2 percent, Logan County, North Dakota
On-Time High School Graduation (percent of freshmen who graduate in four years)	78.2 percent	100 percent, 47 counties nationwide	17 percent, Sedgwick County, Colorado
Associate's Degree or Higher (percent of adults 25 and older)	36.3 percent	74.9 percent Falls Church City, Virginia	8.7 percent, Lake County, Tennessee
Violent Crime (per 100,000 population)	386.3 per 100,000 population	4.7, Keokuk County, Iowa and Bon Homme County, South Dakota	2061.7, St. Louis City, Missouri
Youth Not in School and Not Working (percent ages 16–24)	14.6 percent	2.1 percent, Story, Boone, and Dallas counties, Iowa	34.8 percent, Navajo and Apache counties, Arizona
Primary Care Provider (per 100,000 population)	117.9 per 100,000 population	2013 data incomplete due to definitional change	
Grocery Stores and Produce Vendors (per 10,000 population)	2.2 per 10,000 population	31.0, Yakutat City and Borough, Alaska	0.0, 65 counties nationwide

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