

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

Building a Culture of Health, County by County

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New Rankings Show Healthiest and Least Healthy Counties in Colorado

Prioritizing Infrastructure Investments Can Fuel More Civically Active Communities and Healthier Residents

Madison, Wis. — Douglas County ranks the healthiest in Colorado and Otero is the least healthy county in the state, according to new [County Health Rankings](https://www.countyhealthrankings.org) data from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The Rankings are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

For more than a decade, Rankings' data, evidence, guidance and stories have broadened the nation's understanding about the multiple factors that shape health. This year, we find that counties with well-resourced civic infrastructure have higher rates of high school completion, higher household incomes, less income inequality and lower rates of children in poverty and uninsured adults. In these communities, people also tend to live longer.

"Our findings reveal that people and places thrive when all residents have the chance to participate in their communities," said Sheri Johnson, principal investigator of County Health Rankings & Roadmaps and director of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. "History shows that we can remake systems and structures through civic participation that are beneficial to all."

This year's County Health Rankings looked at a series of factors to measure civic infrastructure and participation in counties including access to parks, school funding adequacy, broadband, voter turnout and self-reported census participation. To see how your state fares on these measures of civic health – the opportunities we have to use our voice in shaping our communities – visit <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/colorado?year=2023>.

"People need to know that their input and lived experience is valued, and that those in power take their opinions seriously," said Tom Gonzales, director of Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment and president of the Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials. "Civic participation in the form of community input and leadership is necessary for effective public health and government, but most engagement efforts fall short and reduce trust in the process. Governments can rebuild trust and accountability by investing in compensated community participation that accommodates all livelihoods. The result will be more effective public health, more transparent and trusted government and improved civic participation that goes beyond voting."

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Improving Civic Health Requires Action

The Rankings offer several solutions to build civic health, including investing in libraries, community centers and other public spaces to encourage in-person connections; expanding civic knowledge and skills through youth leadership programs and implementing voter registration and turnout initiatives to expand representation in the democratic process.

In addition to these solutions, the program's [What Works for Health](#) offers more than 400 evidence-informed strategies to help communities on their health improvement journey. Each strategy is rated for its effectiveness and likely impact on health disparities. Additionally, the Rankings website has improved features to make it more accessible. Data are now easier to find, use and understand with detailed descriptions that offer helpful context about counties with information such as links to identify the Indigenous nations native to the land.

Visit countyhealthrankings.org to learn more.

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About the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, provides local communities with data on more than 90 health-influencing factors such as housing, education, jobs and access to quality health care. The Rankings are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

About the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute advances health and well-being for all by developing and evaluating interventions and promoting evidence-based approaches to policy and practice at the local, state and national levels. The Institute works across the full spectrum of factors that contribute to health and equity. The Institute leads the work on the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. For more information, visit <http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu>.