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The New Orleans Index at Twenty

Measuring Greater New Orleans' progress toward resilience



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STEERING COMMITTEE

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About The New Orleans Index at Twenty

Following Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures, the Brookings Institution began publishing *The Katrina Index* in December 2005 to track the recovery of Metro New Orleans with indicators measuring population, economy, housing, and infrastructure. In 2007, the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center began to co-publish *The Index* with the Brookings Institution, with an expanded number of indicators. Together, The Data Center and Brookings renamed the report *The New Orleans Index*. *The Index's* value as a regularly updated, one-stop shop of Hurricane Katrina recovery indicators made it the go-to resource for national and local media, decisionmakers across all levels of government, researchers, and leaders in the private sector and nonprofit community.

The New Orleans Index at Five, published for the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in August 2010, moved past disaster recovery and relied on 20 indicators to examine progress toward metropolitan prosperity, organized by economy, inclusion, quality of life, and sustainability. In addition, *The New Orleans Index at Five* initiative systematically documented major post-Katrina reforms with the inclusion of seven papers contributed by leading local scholars. *The New Orleans Index at Ten*, published in August 2015, examined 30 of the most up-to-date metrics on New Orleans' progress toward prosperity, and was accompanied by a collection of papers contributed by more than a dozen leading local scholars with recommendations for furthering progress in 10 key areas.

The New Orleans Index at Twenty pivots to examine the extent to which Metro New Orleans has the resilience capacity needed to rebound and adapt to the shocks which are occurring with greater frequency. *The New Orleans Index at Twenty Collection* systematically documents major post-Katrina reforms with the inclusion of more than a dozen papers contributed by leading local and Brookings scholars. Then, relying on more than 20 indicators, we examine progress toward metropolitan resiliency, organized by housing and infrastructure, economy and workforce, wealth, and people.

The New Orleans Index at Twenty examines trends for the metropolitan statistical area federally defined as eight parishes from 1993–2002 and 2013–2023¹ (see Reference Maps on page 12). For the vast majority of indicators, we compare Metro New Orleans to the United States or to the other 49 largest metros in the country.

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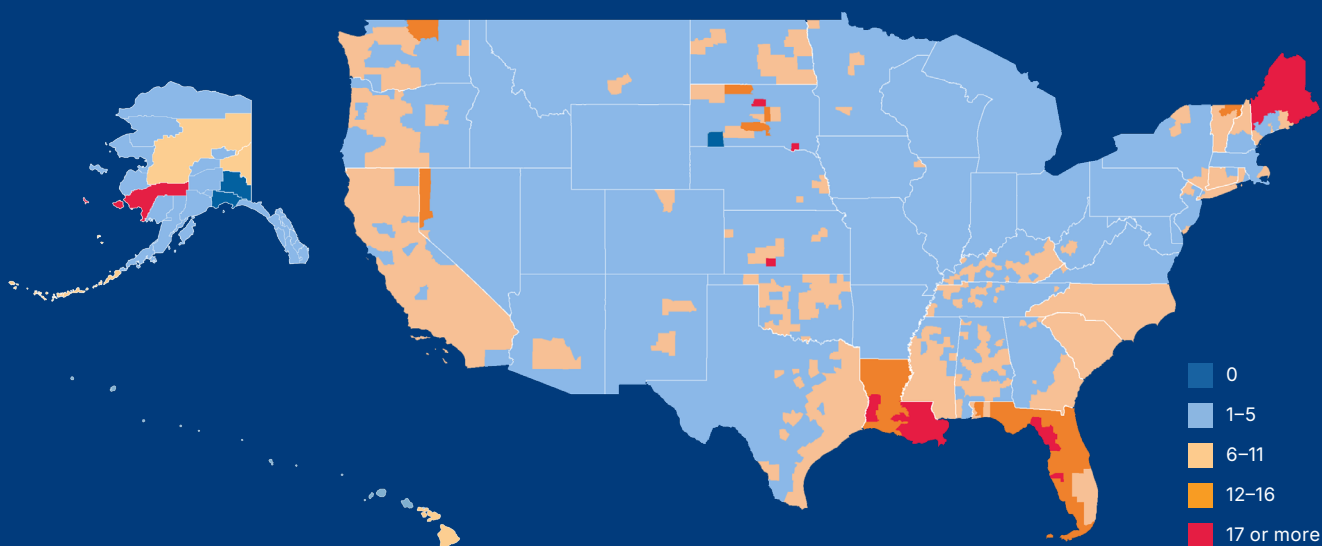
Executive Summary

Two decades ago, when Hurricane Katrina struck and the federal levees protecting Metro New Orleans failed, the U.S. experienced a disaster on an unprecedented scale. Extreme weather, like Hurricane Katrina, has become more common since, and Americans can now expect to witness multiple large-scale shocks annually. Since 2020 for example, Metro New Orleans itself has been hit by Hurricanes Zeta, Ida, and Francine in quick succession. The summer of 2023 brought a record number of days exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and extreme rainfall events and tornadoes are increasing in frequency. Other types of shocks are also a threat. Between March 2020 and March 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic killed more than 2,300 people across Metro New Orleans.² All total, each parish in Metro New Orleans has had at least 17 declared disasters since 2020—four times more than the national average—making Metro New Orleans a national outlier.

August 29, 2025 is the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and an important moment to reflect on the metro's progress since that historic event. Given the increasing number of shocks the region is experiencing, arguably the most important assessment is of the

Number of FEMA disaster declarations by county

Cumulative January 2020 through December 2024



Source: FEMA. See source notes on page 46 for technical details.

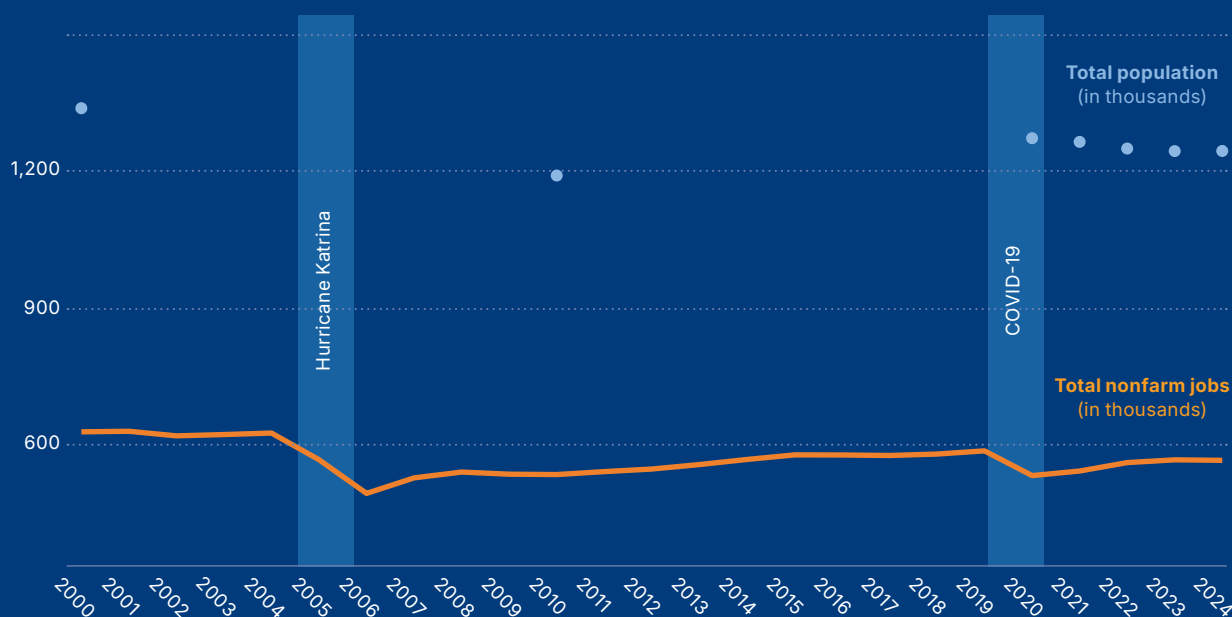
region's resilience capacity. To be sure, the metro has engaged in a myriad number of actions to reduce its flood risk and restore its housing stock. But resilience requires more than strong infrastructure and housing.

Regional resilience has two closely related dimensions. First, resilience describes a region's actual performance following a disruption. A metro area is considered resilient if it returns to, or exceeds, its pre-shock trajectory.³ Looking at the key metrics of jobs and population, we see Hurricane Katrina and the COVID-19 pandemic were significant blows to Metro New Orleans' economy, which now has 10 percent fewer jobs and 7 percent smaller population than in 2000—suggesting significant weaknesses in the region's ability to rebound to pre-disaster trend lines.

Second, resilience refers to the capacities, resources, and traits—whether inherent or

Metro New Orleans jobs and population

2000–2024, Annual averages



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 2000, 2010, and 2020, Population Estimates 2021–2024, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. See source notes on page 46 for technical details and a graph of job change for the 50 largest metropolitan areas from 2000 to 2024.

developed—that enable a metropolitan area to absorb, adapt to, or recover from a shock. That's an important point; a resilient metro area is one that isn't just trapped in a cycle of disaster response and recovery, but is also able to adapt in ways that reduce the risks to shocks communities and the region face. A review of academic literature and case studies reveals a shared hypothesis regarding the factors that strengthen a region's ability to rebound from, adapt to, or mitigate adverse shocks. These factors include:

- **A strong and diverse regional economy:** Economic diversity, particularly across major traded industry clusters, enhances a region's ability to withstand or avoid economic disruptions. Robust entrepreneurship contributes to economic diversity by introducing new businesses that can broaden the industrial base of a metro.
- **A highly skilled and educated workforce:** Workers with advanced skills and formal education are more adaptable to evolving economic demands. Regions with a high concentration of well-educated residents are better positioned to manage and recover from economic shocks.
- **Access to wealth:** The availability of financial capital—across government, private, philanthropic, and individual sources—provides a buffer during crises and enables investment in recovery, reconstruction, and reform.
- **Robust social capital:** Communities characterized by strong place attachment, wellness, civic engagement, and social cohesion tend to be more resilient. A narrower gap between high- and low-income residents also contributes to social cohesion and, therefore, resilience capacity.
- **Community competence:** The capacity of a community to address challenges, generate innovative solutions, implement responsive policies, and build effective political and institutional partnerships is critical for adaptive and sustained recovery.

Together, these attributes form the foundation for regional resilience and influence how effectively a metro area can navigate and recover from a range of shocks. *The New Orleans Index at Twenty* examines more than 20 indicators to provide essential insights into the region's resilience capacity, highlighting strengths and weaknesses across key contributing factors organized into four categories of housing and infrastructure, economy and workforce, wealth, and people. *The Index* serves as a valuable tool for guiding efforts to boost the resilience capacity of Metro New Orleans. Key findings include:

Housing and infrastructure

Metro New Orleans will need substantial new investments in stronger housing stock, flood protection, and reliable electric supplies in order to withstand the shocks to come.

- Roughly 4,000 Metro New Orleans homes have now upgraded their roofs to the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety's new FORTIFIED roof standard. But this leaves some 99 percent of homes without FORTIFIED roofs and vulnerable to frequent storm-force winds.
- A full 85 percent of properties in Metro New Orleans have a major or greater risk of experiencing some level of flooding in the next 30 years.
- Over the last decade, Louisiana has experienced the most cumulative power outage hours (198) of any state in the nation.

Economy and workforce

Legacy industries like tourism, oil & gas, shipping, and petrochemical manufacturing still dominate the New Orleans economy, but environmental services, water management, video production, and performing arts are contributing to diversification of the metro economy. Entrepreneurship surged post-Katrina and remains high 20 years later. Adult educational attainment levels and internet access rates have caught up to the nation but remain below that of other large metros.

- Despite substantial private and public investments, tourism, oil & gas, water transportation, and upstream chemical clusters have shed 38 percent of jobs since 2004, primarily due to increasing replacement of workers with automation and improved technology that increase efficiency.⁴
- Since 2004, New Orleans' environmental services cluster has more than doubled. But construction products and services—linked to water management—have declined since 2018.
- Performing arts and video production jobs in Metro New Orleans have grown since 2004 but still offer low average wages—\$43,603 and \$41,950—despite strong national compensation of \$77,903 and \$114,960 respectively.
- Post-Katrina, Metro New Orleans has consistently outperformed both the nation and other large metros in business startup rates. During the 3-year period from 2023 to 2025, 592 out of every 100,000 adults in the region launched new businesses annually—34 percent above the national rate and 29 percent above the average of the other 49 largest U.S. metros.
- Educational attainment in Metro New Orleans has risen to match the national average, with 35 percent of adults holding a bachelor's degree and 63 percent having some college education. However, the region still trails the other 49 largest metros, where 40 percent hold a bachelor's degree and 67 percent have some college, as of 2023.
- The share of Metro New Orleans households without internet declined to 6.4 percent in 2023, but remains above the 4.1 percent average among the 50 largest metros.

Wealth

Wealth is a protective buffer when disasters strike. It can be used to support preparedness and also contribute to a nimble recovery, reducing the likelihood that a shock will push a family into chronic poverty. But (material) wealth is in short supply in New Orleans, with below average philanthropic resources, and high poverty levels. Among those New Orleanians with positive net assets, racial gaps are significant, but so are gaps within races. To the extent that wealth is held in homeownership, these assets may be insecure as homeowners are increasingly dropping insurance coverage.

- In Metro New Orleans, White households hold about 10 times the median wealth of Black households and more than six times that of Hispanic households. These gaps persist even after factoring in education and age.
- Although 85 percent of properties face a major or higher risk of flooding, flood insurance coverage varies widely across Metro New Orleans. About half of all properties in St. Tammany, Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Bernard parishes are insured. And only one-third are covered in St. Charles and Plaquemines. In St. John the Baptist, just 25 percent of properties have flood insurance.
- The poverty rate in Metro New Orleans, at 20 percent, is significantly higher than the national rate of 12 percent. But the majority of people in poverty (130,000) live in the parishes surrounding New Orleans rather than in the city itself.
- Per capita philanthropic spending by Metro New Orleans foundations is roughly half the national average, and ranks 41st out of the 50 largest metros.

People

Metro New Orleans' people are its strength. While rising income inequality and a sharp decline in union membership have weakened social cohesion, the region's rich tradition of social clubs continues to foster community connection, and attachment to place remains strong with 71 percent native to Louisiana.

- Metro New Orleans has enjoyed a high nativity rate for decades. With 71 percent of residents native to Louisiana, New Orleanians' attachment to place greatly exceeds the national average and that of other large metros.
- Income inequality undermines social cohesion, and in Metro New Orleans, the top 5 percent of households earn 12 times more than the bottom 20 percent, surpassing the national income ratio of 10 to 1.
- The number of workers covered by union membership has fallen in Metro New Orleans by more than half over the last 24 years.
- New Orleans has a long tradition of social aid and pleasure clubs historically rooted in Black communities to address unmet needs and support cultural and justice movements. With 172 social, pleasure or recreational clubs, New Orleans is near the top in social clubs per capita among the 50 largest metros.
- In Metro New Orleans, more than 200,000 residents are over 65 years old and are increasingly likely to need assistance responding to and recovering from disasters.
- The share of working age adults without health insurance has dropped from 24 percent in 2013 to 10 percent in 2023 in Metro New Orleans, bringing it in line with the national average and the other 49 largest metros.

Conclusion

Researchers examining disasters over the past century have found that large-scale catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina often reinforce existing trends and deepen inequalities. However, some regions have managed to break from these patterns by using recovery aid to reform and strengthen institutions that reduce inequality and improve social cohesion, while also tapping into new and emerging industries to diversify and bolster their economies.⁵

The papers accompanying *The New Orleans Index at Twenty* cover reform efforts across a range of domains including water policy, community safety, K-12 education, land use planning, and climate adaptation. They reveal that Metro New Orleans has made good progress toward increasing resiliency through a large number of key institutional and sector wide reforms. There is no doubt that external philanthropy, working with local philanthropy, played a major role in these gains.⁶

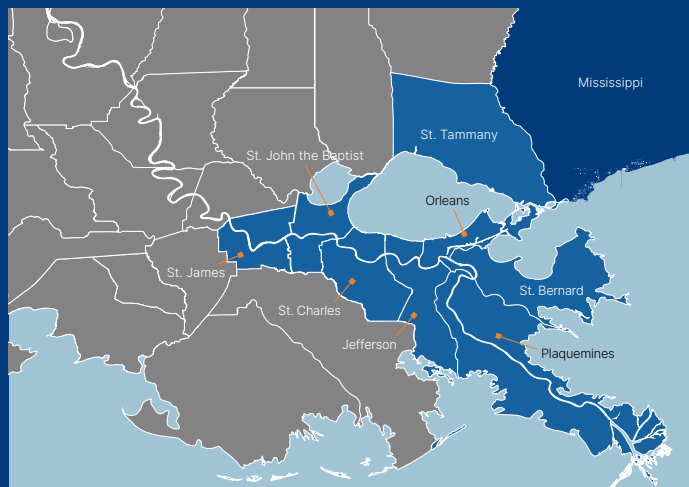
To date, economic transformation remains a work in progress. Entrepreneurship is a bright spot, and if well-fortified and directed, can help the economy to diversify and weather the shocks ahead. Recent investments in lower-carbon energy production will help nudge the economy toward an internationally growing market. Recently passed increases in oil & gas revenue sharing which, by Louisiana law, must go to coastal restoration, can refortify a growing industry specialization.⁷ Ensuring this work sustainably grows the economy will require the deliberate reinforcement of the core dynamics of cluster development: the sharing of inputs and resources, the alignment of workers and firms with high-productivity roles, and the exchange of specialized knowledge that drives innovation.⁸ Implementing the 50-year, \$50 billion Coastal Master Plan remains an important component of both shoring up flood protections and supporting growth in this industry.

At the end of the day, New Orleanians and all Americans must plan for a future with increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Compounding this challenge will be the tremendously disruptive changes that AI will bring to the metro and national economy. There is no doubt that the next 20 years will include a number of shocks for New Orleans and the entire country. New Orleanians have demonstrated their capacity for community problem solving by substantially reforming a number of key institutions. And New Orleanians' love of their home contributes to a culture of care that is exemplary. As together we navigate the challenges the future will bring, leaders and residents must unite around policies that have as their primary goal a high quality of life for everyone.

Reference Maps

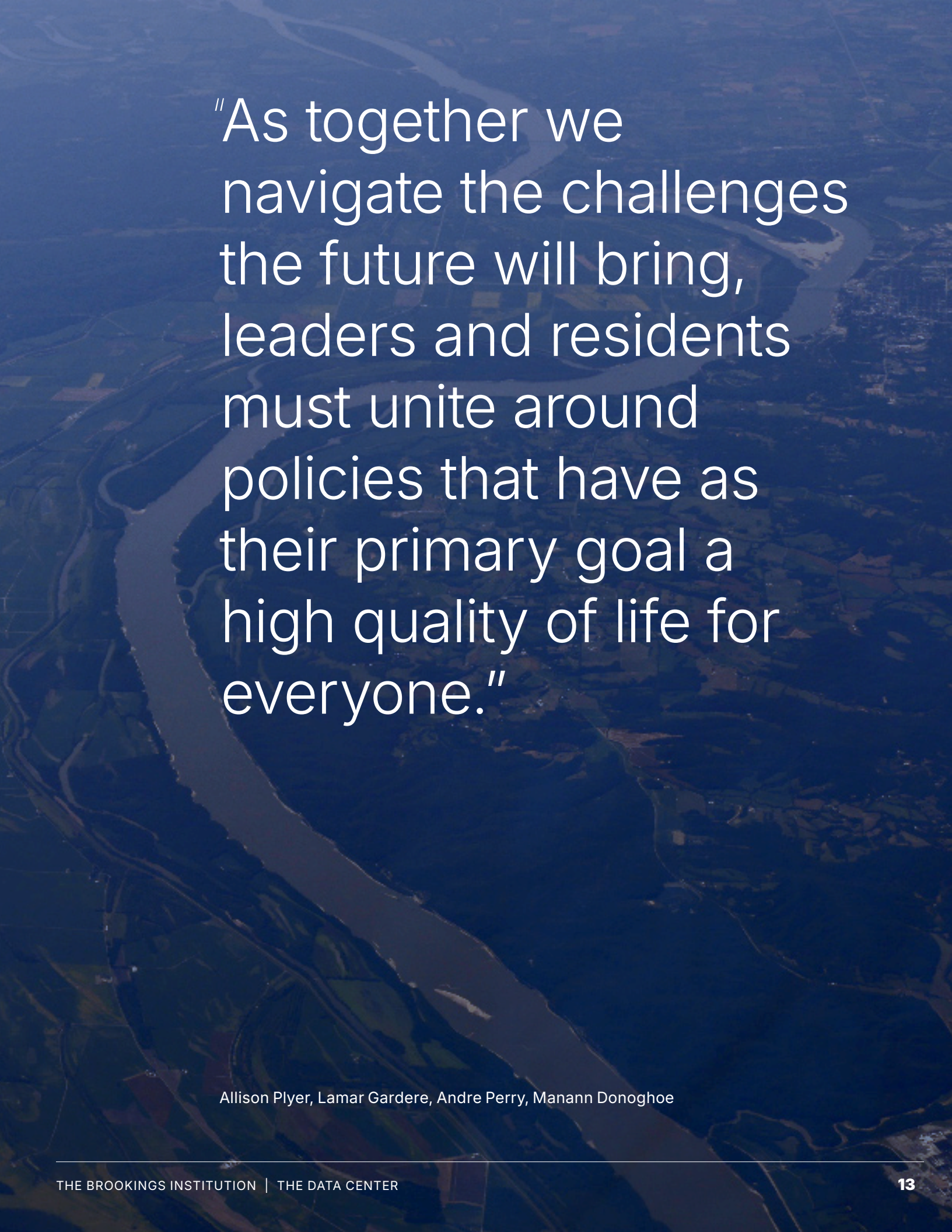
Geographies of analysis

Metro New Orleans



50 largest metros



An aerial photograph of a river meandering through a landscape of green fields and dark forests. The river is a light brown color, contrasting with the darker tones of the land. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

"As together we
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Allison Plyer, Lamar Gardere, Andre Perry, Manann Donoghoe



Photo source: Shutterstock

Housing and Infrastructure

From bioswales and amphibious architecture to compact fluorescent lamps and solar powered Community Lighthouses, New Orleanians are coming together to adapt at record speed to the challenges before them.

—Jacqueline Richard, *The New Orleans Index at Twenty Collection*

FORTIFIED Roofs

Why is this important?

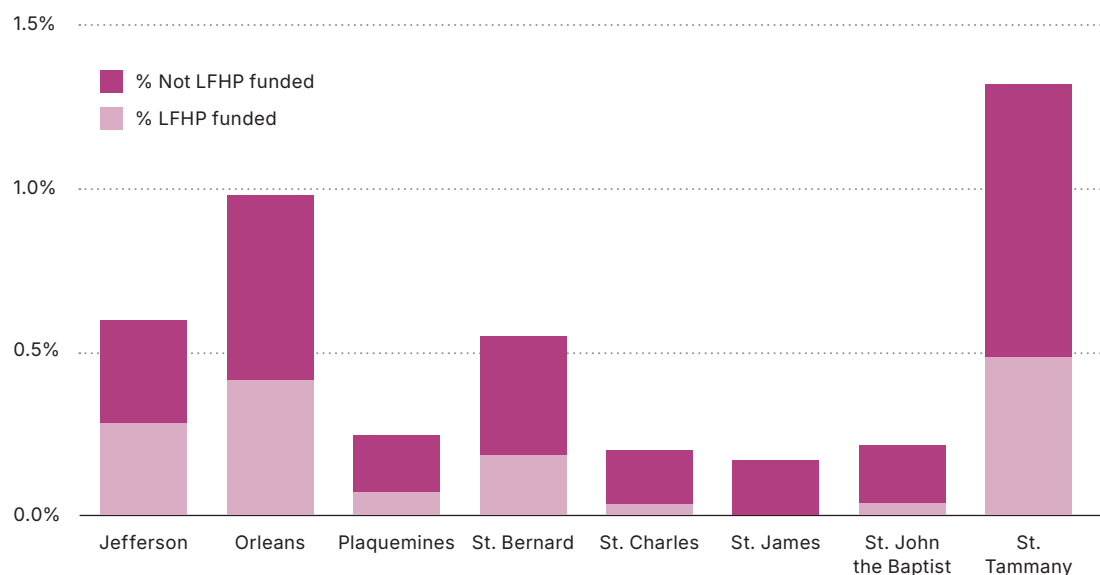
The Louisiana Fortify Homes Program (LFHP) encourages homeowners to upgrade their roofs to the FORTIFIED roof standard sent by the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety. The program is designed to help homeowners strengthen their roofs to better withstand hurricane force winds and other severe weather. Homeowners who fortify their roofs can add the FORTIFIED endorsement to their insurance policy, and the Legislative auditor found that homeowners with fortified roofs have benefitted from lower insurance premiums.⁹

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

The LFHP began in October 2023 and in its first year and a half, just over 4,000 homes in Metro New Orleans have upgraded their roofs to the FORTIFIED roof standard. These 4,000 homes represent less than 1 percent of all metro area properties. Homeowners can apply for a \$10,000 grant to contribute to the cost of fortifying their roof. The state has designated a limited amount of money for these grants, and they are awarded by lottery. Only about 1,600 homes in Metro New Orleans have received a LFHP grant.

Percent of properties with FORTIFIED roofs

Cumulative October 2023 through February 2025



Source: Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) and the First Street Foundation. See source notes on page 48 for technical details.

Flood Risk

Why is this important?

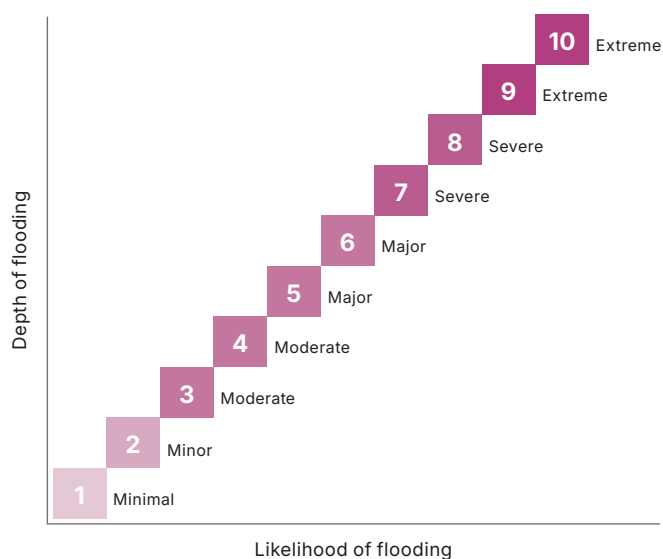
Flood events are happening with increasing frequency across the country, costing the U.S. over \$100 billion in damages each year, and leading to an increasing number of lives lost.¹⁰ Flooding caused by storm surge, intense rainfall, overflowing rivers, and high tides is increasingly affecting the metro area, making effective prediction and mitigation efforts more relevant than ever.¹¹ First Street Foundation has created technology that assesses a property's flood risk, factoring in existing flood protection measures such as marshes, wetlands, levees, flood walls, and retention ponds.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

Fully 85 percent of properties in Metro New Orleans have a major or greater risk of experiencing some level of flooding in the next 30 years. Properties at "major" to "extreme" risk of flooding have at least an 80 percent cumulative probability of being flooded within 30 years (at least a 5 percent chance in any given year). St. John the Baptist Parish has the largest share of properties at extreme risk of flooding (50 percent). While St. Bernard, Plaquemines, and Jefferson parishes have the largest shares of properties at severe or greater risk of flooding at 96 percent, 87 percent, and 81 percent respectively.

Flood risk

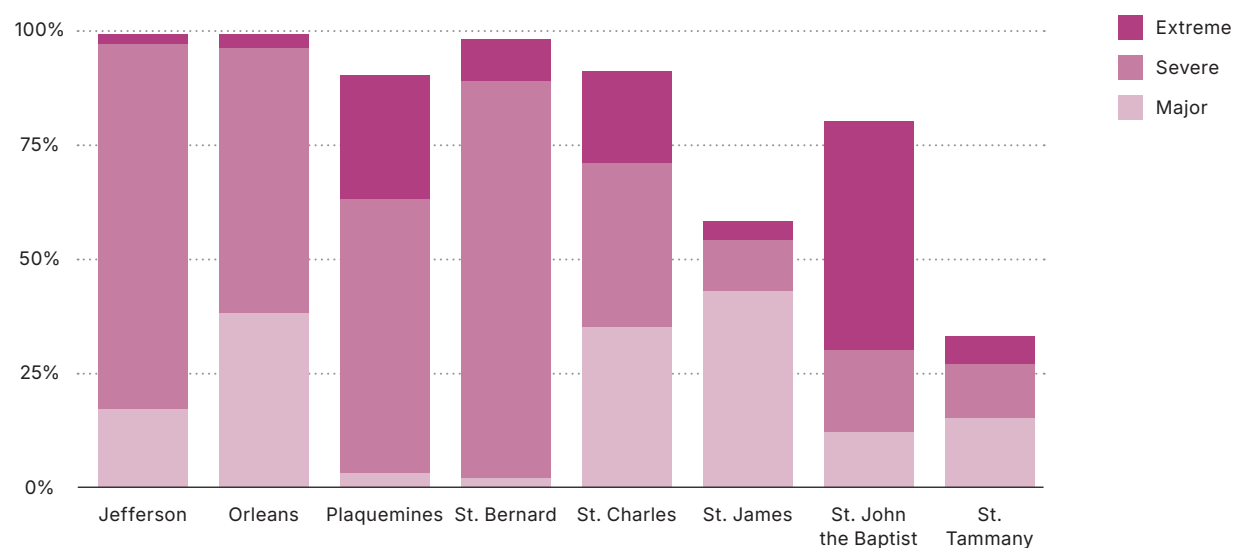
First Street Foundation's Flood Factor matrix



Source: First Street. 2022. Flood Factor Matrix. First Street Help Center

Share of properties at either Major, Severe, or Extreme risk of flooding

Based on 30-year cumulative flood likelihood as of January 2024



Source: First Street Foundation. Flood Factor: Flood Risk Data and Model. See source notes on page 48 for technical details.

Electric Infrastructure

Why is this important?

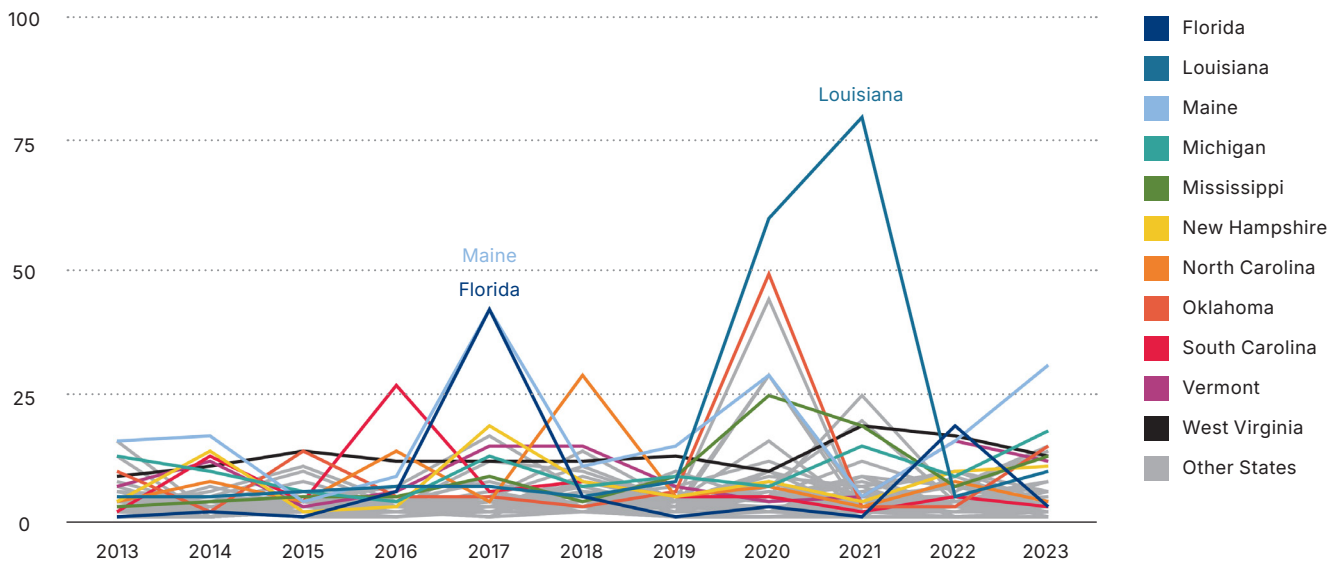
Power outages frequently occur during extreme heat or cold, leaving residents without vital heating, cooling, or access to power for medical devices. These blackouts also increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning as residents turn to rarely used gas generators.¹² Frequent outages also place financial strain on families. Costs related to hotel stays, repairs, and food and medicine spoilage can mount up quickly.¹³ Additionally, longer duration outages have a psychological impact on residents.¹⁴

How is Louisiana doing?

From 2013 to 2023, Louisiana recorded the highest total number of power outage hours in the nation, with a cumulative 198 hours of interruptions, followed closely by Maine at 195. West Virginia is a distant third at 142 hours. Florida ranked 10th with 84 total hours of power outage from 2013 to 2023.

Average annual duration of electric power interruptions, by state

Hours per customer



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration. See source notes on page 48 for technical details.

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Photo source: Shutterstock

Economy and Workforce

To date, economic transformation remains a work in progress. Entrepreneurship is a bright spot, and if well-fortified and directed, can help the economy to diversify and weather the shocks ahead.

—The New Orleans Index at Twenty

Entrepreneurship

Why is this important?

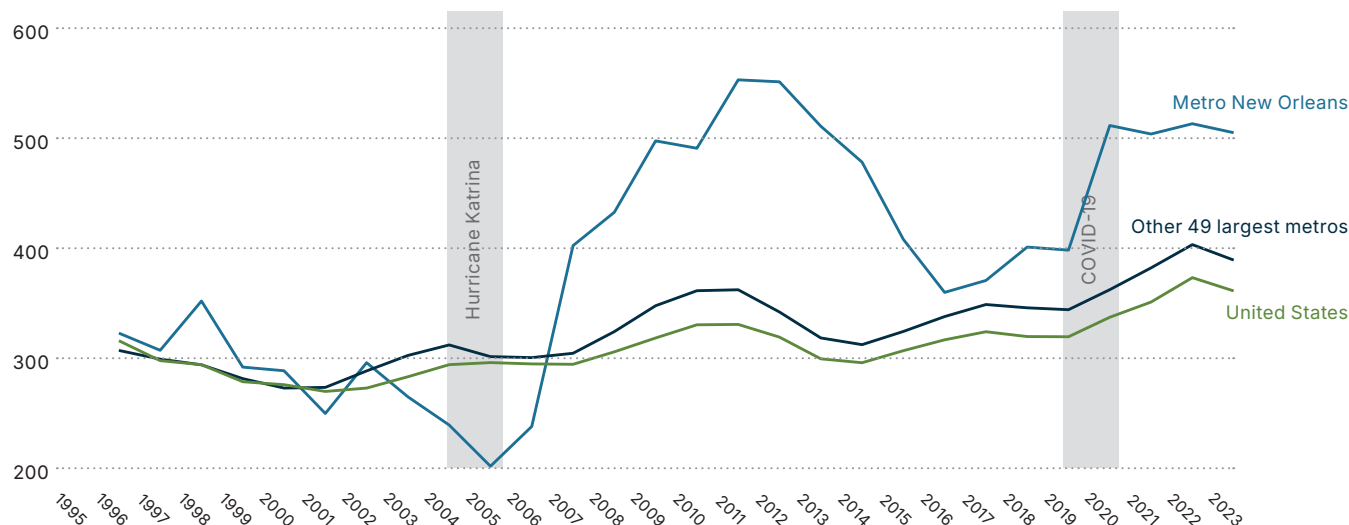
Strong entrepreneurial activity enhances economic diversity by launching new businesses that expand and diversify a metro area's economy. It also serves as an important pathway for job creation and increased income and wealth, particularly among immigrants and Black Americans. Although entrepreneurial activity naturally involves cycles of business formation and failure, a region's capacity to identify market needs and opportunities reflects the creativity essential in today's innovation-driven economy. This indicator tracks the rate at which adults in Metro New Orleans are starting new businesses.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

Metro New Orleans' rate of business startups is 35 percent higher than the national average, and 29 percent higher than the average of the other 49 largest metros. In the immediate post-Katrina 3-year period of 2006-2008, the entrepreneurship rate spiked to 32 percent higher than that of the other 49 largest metros, and despite fluctuations, has remained higher than the other metros every year since. During the 3-year period from 2023-2025, 592 out of every 100,00 adults started up businesses annually in Metro New Orleans, compared to 460 in the other 49 largest metros and 439 nationally.

Individuals starting up businesses

Per 100,000 adult population (3-year averages)



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey.

Economic Diversity

Why is this important?

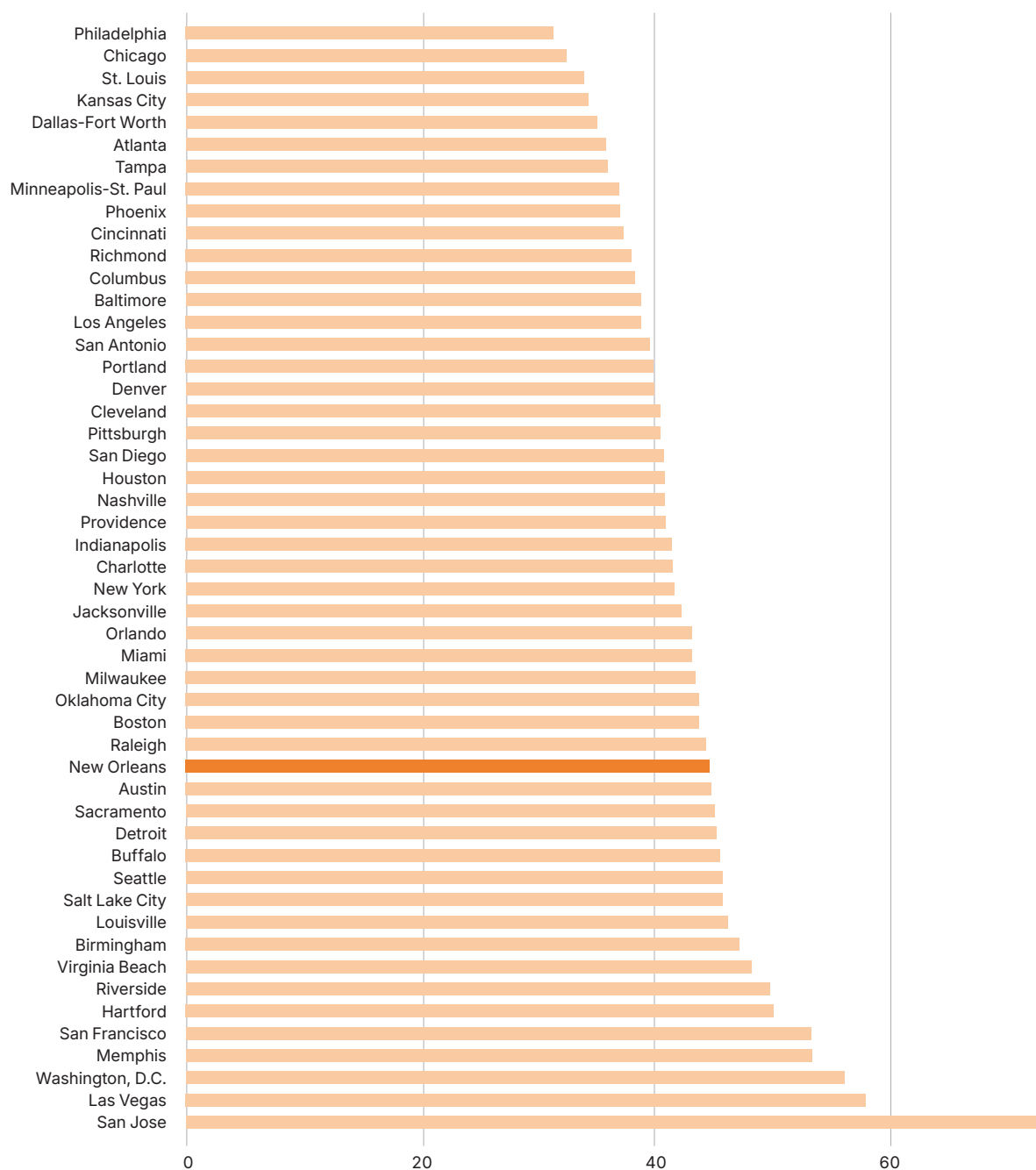
Economic diversity in a region indicates its economy is not overly reliant on a single industry or a narrow set of sectors. Regions with limited economic diversification are generally less resilient, as a downturn in the dominant industry can have widespread and lasting impacts. In contrast, economically diverse regions are better positioned to absorb and recover from such shocks, as strength in other sectors can help offset losses and support recovery.¹⁵ Additionally, the stability that economic diversity brings can attract businesses and skilled workers to a region, which may further support resilience.¹⁶

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

Metro New Orleans ranks 34th in economic diversity among the largest 50 metros, meaning this metro is not highly dependent on a single industry but depends on several industries—with economic diversity that is slightly below average among the top 50 metros. San Jose, Las Vegas, and Washington DC rank as the least diverse of the largest 50 metros. Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis rank as the most diverse.

Economic Diversity Index for 50 largest metropolitan areas, 2021

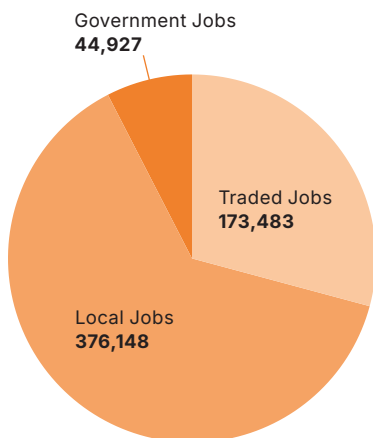
Lower values = more diverse



Source: Chmura Analytics 2021. See page 12 for a reference map of the 50 largest metros. See source notes on page 48 for technical details.

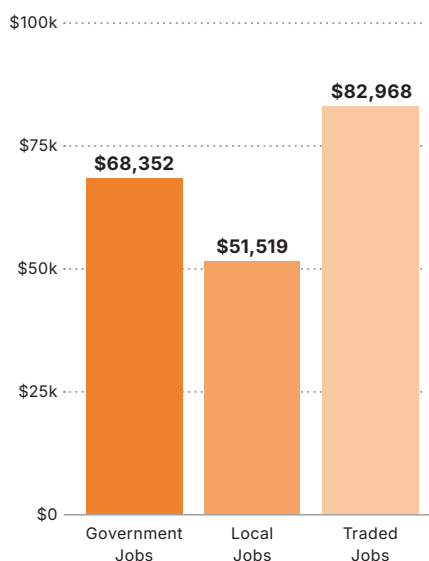
Jobs

Metro New Orleans, 2023



Average annual wages

Metro New Orleans, 2023



Drivers of the Economy

Why is this important?

Traded industries are sectors that produce goods or services for customers outside the region, generating external revenue and serving as a primary driver of metropolitan economic growth. In contrast, local-serving and government jobs tend to be a result of economic growth rather than a source of it, as they rely on local demand and funding rather than attracting income from outside the region. In most metros, there are approximately two local-serving or government jobs for every one job in a traded industry cluster, and traded industries pay higher average wages.¹⁷ The extent of specialization in particular traded industries differs widely from place to place. In this analysis, specializations are defined as traded clusters—identified by the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project—that have a significantly higher share of employment locally compared to the national average yielding a location quotient (LQ) that is higher than one. Measuring and monitoring these clusters over time requires a more advanced level of analysis than is commonly found in standard regional economic reports.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

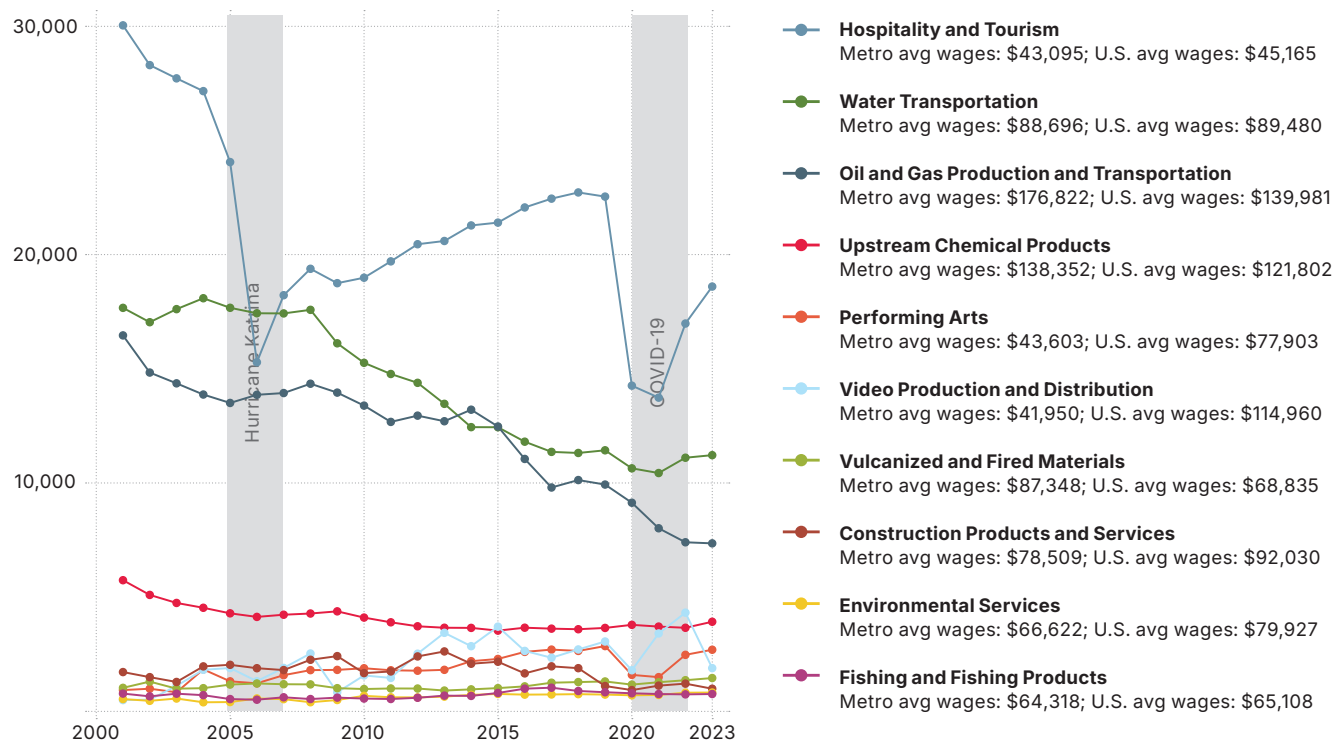
While the New Orleans economy continues to be dominated by legacy industries (oil & gas, shipping, and petrochemical manufacturing), several emerging industries are helping to diversify the region's economy. Oil & gas is increasingly productive but is reducing labor costs through automation and mechanization, and has shed 47 percent of its jobs in Metro New Orleans over the last 20 years.¹⁸ Upstream chemical production and water transportation are similarly becoming increasingly automated and have shed 14 percent and 38 percent of their jobs respectively since 2004.¹⁹ Still, the metro maintains a strong competitive edge in these three sectors, with a location quotient above three. The tourism industry, the largest driver industry in the metro, is also increasingly automating and suffered major job losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, which have not been fully recouped, despite the fact that visitor numbers are rebounding strongly.²⁰ Tourism has 18,600 jobs, down from 27,000 in 2004.

The environmental services cluster has more than doubled in Metro New Orleans since 2004, and now has a location quotient of 1.6. Construction products and services, which is closely tied to water management, experienced some growth from 2005 to 2018 but has since declined to less than half its 2005 level—suggesting an emerging industry that needs continued investment. Video production

and distribution grew jobs from less than 2,000 jobs in 2004 to over 4,000 jobs in 2022. Similarly, jobs in performing arts grew from less than 2,000 in 2004 to 2,700 by 2023. However, both these clusters currently offer among the lowest average wages of all traded sectors in the metro area at \$43,603, and \$41,950, respectively. Yet, they hold the potential for significant wage growth, as the national average in these fields is \$77,903 and \$114,960, respectively. Achieving wage growth in these sectors locally will be important, because the living wage for a household with one adult and one child is \$75,213 annually according to MIT.

Jobs by traded cluster

For the 10 strongest specializations, Metro New Orleans



Source: Lightcast and The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project. See source notes on page 48 for technical details.

Local-Serving Clusters

Why is this important?

Local-serving clusters typically mirror the performance of the broader traded economy. When traded industries experience growth, they often drive population increases and higher demand for local services, resulting in corresponding growth in local-serving sectors.²¹ In this sense, local clusters are largely a result of economic expansion rather than a driver of it. Despite not being primary engines of economic growth, local-serving clusters play a vital role due to the scale of employment they provide and the essential services they deliver. However, it is important to note that wages in many local-serving clusters tend to be lower than those in traded industry sectors.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

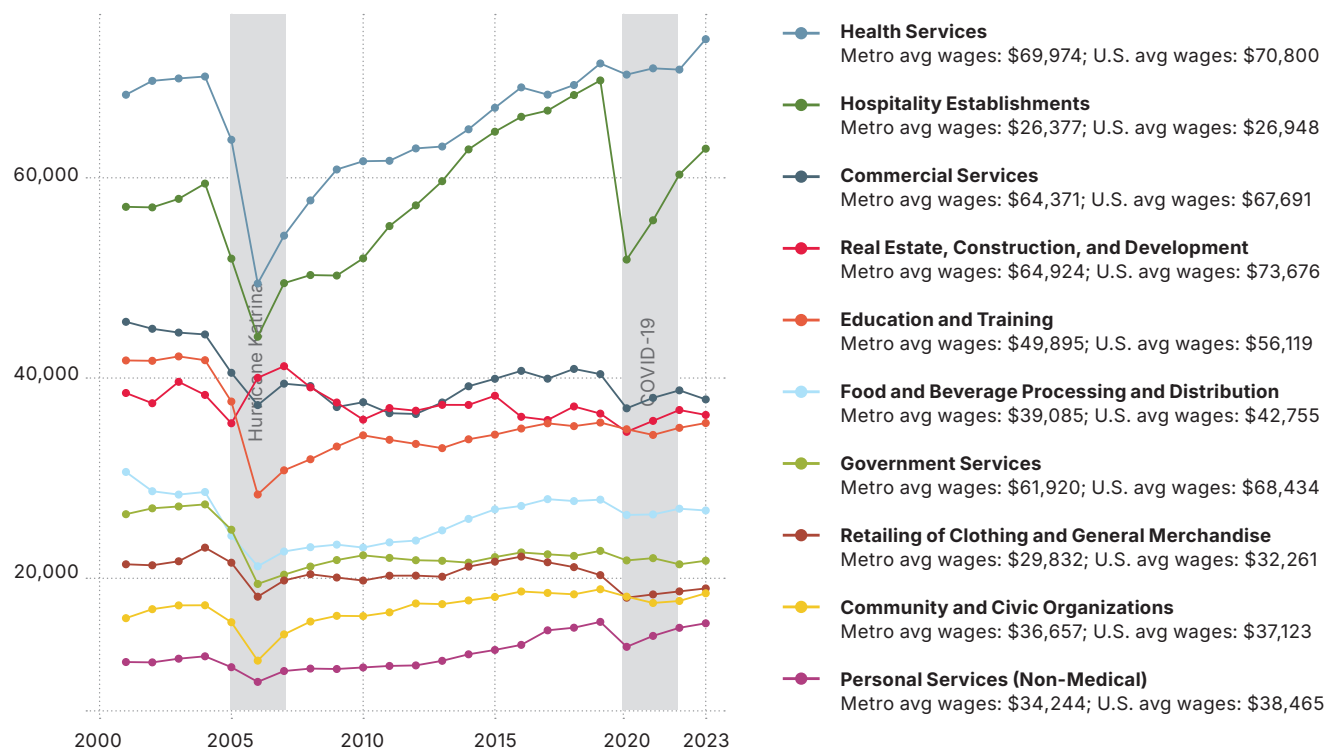
Local-serving clusters in Metro New Orleans have generally followed the region's population trend. Most experienced sharp declines following the 2005 evacuation caused by Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures, but have rebounded along with population levels. Local-serving health service jobs have increased locally and nationally, as the baby boomers age and demand more health services. In Metro New Orleans, health services jobs expanded from 70,000 in 2004 to over 73,000 in 2023. In fact, health services jobs are growing slightly more rapidly at the local level than nationally. The sectors contributing most to this growth include specialty, psychiatric, and substance abuse hospitals. Local hospitality establishment jobs took a major hit during the COVID-19 pandemic, falling from 69,000 in 2019 to less than 52,000 in 2020 and have not fully rebounded, reaching only 62,750 jobs by 2023. Several hospitality establishment sectors have a location quotient greater than one, suggesting they are more concentrated in Metro New Orleans than nationally—likely because they enjoy the patronage of visiting tourists. These sectors include drinking places, food service contractors, caterers, gift retailers, and full-service restaurants.



Tourism, with both traded and local-serving components can be hard to measure. See The Data Center's "Benchmarking New Orleans' Tourism Economy" for more.

Jobs by local-serving cluster

For the 10 largest local-serving clusters by jobs, Metro New Orleans



Source: Lightcast and The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project. See source notes on page 49 for technical details.

Educated Workforce

Why is this important?

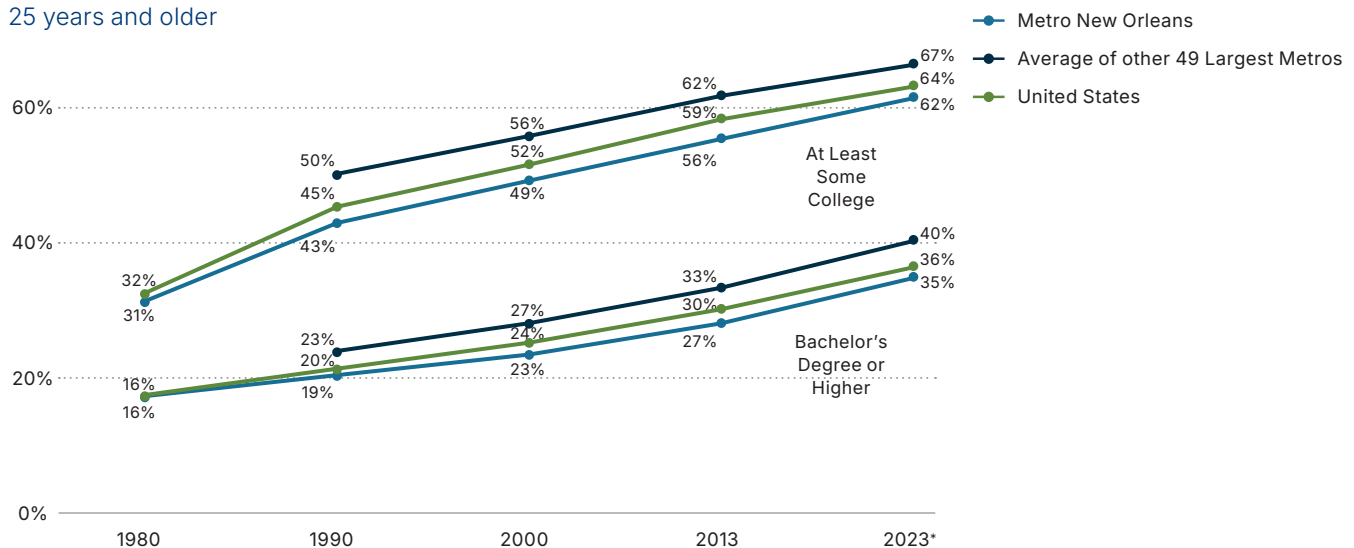
Regions with a highly skilled workforce are more resilient to economic disruptions, because they possess the adaptability and capacity needed to respond to changing conditions. The quality of a region's labor force is also one of the strongest predictors of job growth and overall economic vitality. Businesses seeking to relocate or expand consistently rank workforce skills as a top consideration in their location decisions. Research shows that skilled workers are drawn to regions with a high-quality workforce, and cities with well-educated populations tend to experience faster growth.²² Among available measures, the proportion of adults with a college degree serves as the most significant indicator of workforce educational attainment.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

Over the last decade, Metro New Orleans has caught up with the nation on educational attainment. In 2013, Metro New Orleans had a lower share of adults 25 years and older with a bachelor's or at least some college compared to the national average. As of 2023, educational attainment increased to reach national parity with 35 percent of adults attaining a bachelor's degree and 62 percent with at least some college. However, Metro New Orleans' adult education levels lag that of the other 49 largest metros who averaged 40 percent with a bachelor's and 67 percent with some college in 2023.

Educational Attainment

25 years and older



Source: IPUMS NHGIS data from Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000, and American Community Survey 2013 and 2023. See page 12 for a reference map of the 50 largest metros. See source notes on page 49 for technical details.

Internet Access

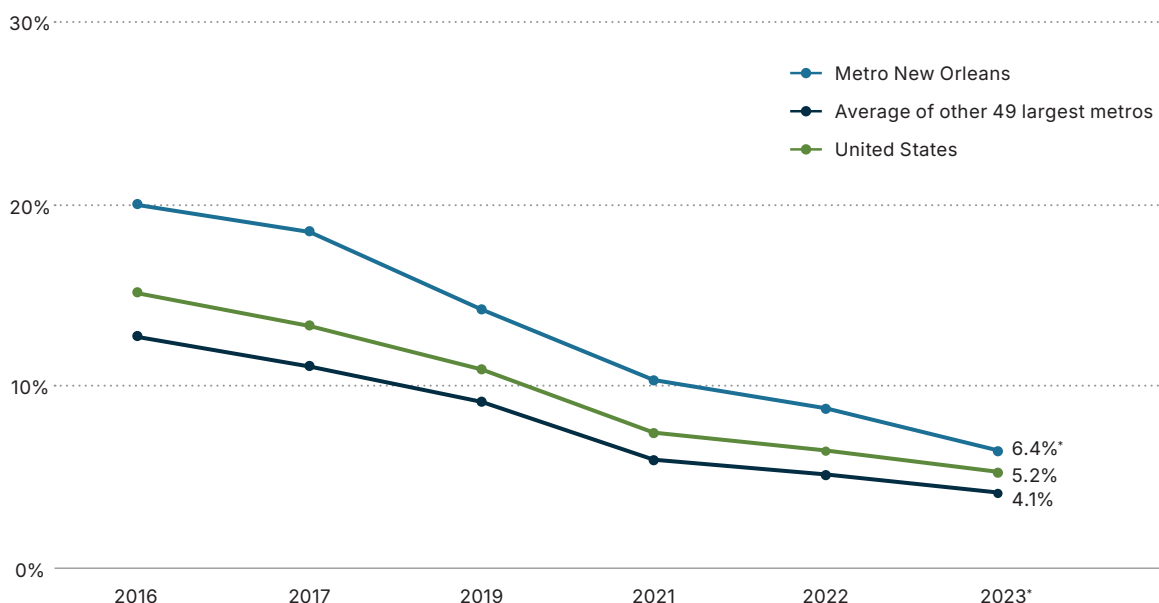
Why is this important?

An internet connection enables individuals and families to participate in the economy, stay up to date with current events, and maintain social connections. Access to the internet significantly strengthens both individual and collective resilience in the face of disasters and disruptions. Households with internet access are more able to access aid immediately after a shock whether natural or economic. Reliable, high-speed internet at home is not only necessary to fully participate in modern society but it also reinforces the resilience of families, communities, social networks, and overall societal cohesion.²³ This indicator measures the share of households with no internet access, not even a cellular data plan.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

The share of Metro New Orleans households without internet has fallen from 20 percent in 2016 to 6.4 percent in 2023, bringing the metro on par with the other 49 largest metros and the U.S. average.

Households without internet access



Source: U.S. Census Bureau data, American Community Survey. See source notes on page 50 for technical details.



Photo source: Shutterstock

Wealth

Household wealth is one of the most important contributors to resilience. It means households have viable choices available to them and the agency to make reasonable decisions on behalf of their families.

—The New Orleans Index at Twenty

Financial Security

Why is this important?

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requires that property with federally backed mortgages, located in FEMA-designated flood zones, maintain flood insurance coverage.²⁴ Homeowners without such mortgages who face flood risk, but do not carry flood insurance, are in a financially vulnerable position—particularly low-income homeowners whose wealth consists of an heirs' properties.

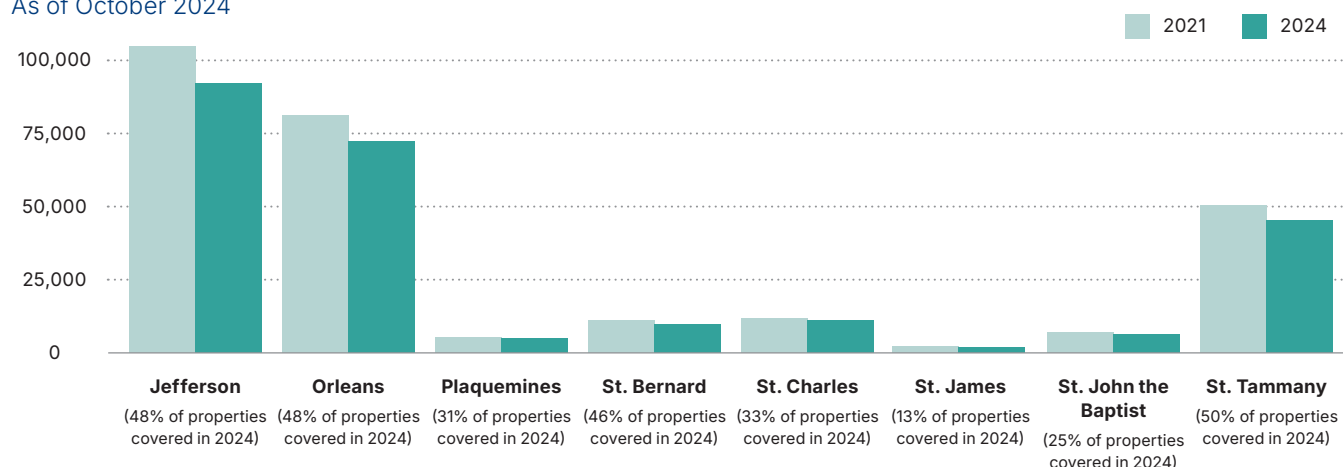
How is Metro New Orleans doing?

In 2021, FEMA began phasing in risk-based NFIP pricing to better reflect individual property flood risk, with annual rate hikes capped at 18 percent. Once the new pricing is fully phased in, the median annual cost of flood insurance for a single-family home will exceed \$1,100 in St. Bernard and Orleans parishes, and \$1,500 in St. Charles, St. James, and St. Tammany parishes. It will exceed \$2,000 in Jefferson and St. John the Baptist parishes. And in Plaquemines Parish the median cost will be \$4,752.²⁵

The effects of these price increases are already being felt in Metro New Orleans, and many homeowners are dropping their flood insurance coverage. From May 2021 to October 2024, the number of flood insurance policies in-force in Metro New Orleans decreased by more than 30,000. In St. Tammany, Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Bernard parishes only about half of all properties now have flood insurance. In St. Charles and Plaquemines parishes only about 1 in 3 properties have flood insurance. In St. John the Baptist only 1 in 4 (25 percent) properties have flood insurance. And in St. James 13 percent of properties are covered for floods.

National Flood Insurance Program policies in-force

As of October 2024



Source: First Street Foundation and NFIP. See source notes on page 50 for technical details.

Household Net Worth

Why is this important?

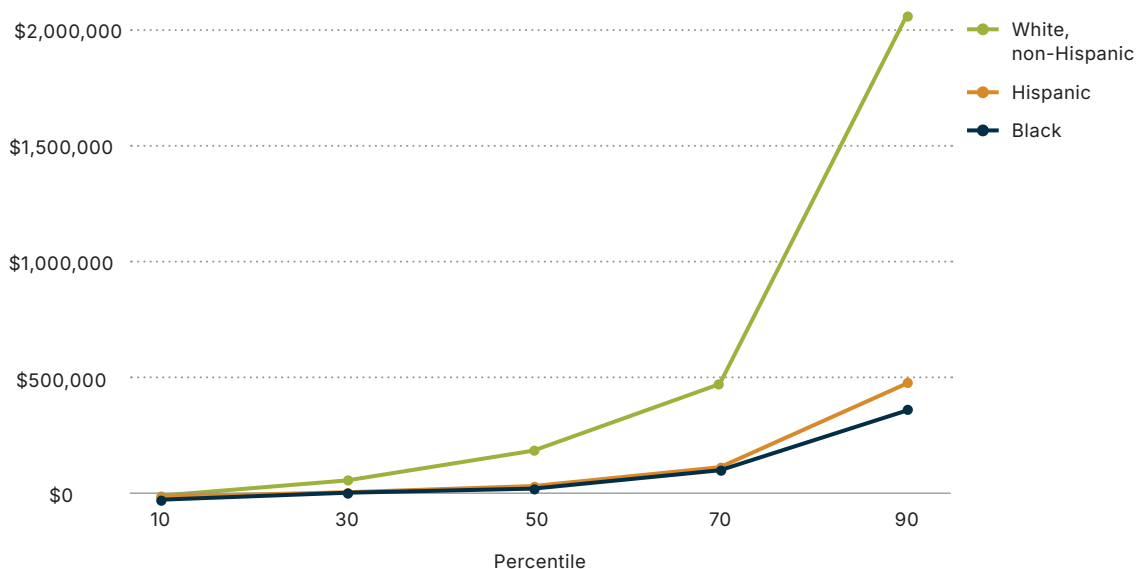
Household wealth is one of the most important contributors to resilience. Household wealth is the balance of all assets minus all debts. But an examination of wealth based on what it facilitates—and not just its monetary properties—reveals properties that enable families to cope with housing damage, medical costs, and insurance costs. Moreover, wealth can provide the adaptive cushion needed when economic conditions dramatically change and lead to layoffs and/or require new skill acquisition.²⁶ It means households have viable choices available to them and the agency to make reasonable decisions on behalf of their families. Because resources and assets are often passed on to future generations, wealth can also help to ensure longer term resilience for communities.²⁷ Unfortunately, local-level data on wealth is largely unavailable nationwide. To address this gap, The Data Center innovated model-based statistical estimates which include disaggregations by a range of factors including race, age, income, education, and homeownership.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

White households in Metro New Orleans are estimated to have about 10 times the median net worth of Black households and more than six times the median net worth of Hispanic households. Across roughly the bottom third of the wealth distribution, White, Black, and Hispanic households have comparably low levels of wealth. But near the upper end, relatively affluent Black and Hispanic households have only as much wealth as the average White household. These disparities cannot be fully accounted for by differences in educational attainment. Wealth among Black college graduates is comparable to that of White households with no bachelor's degree, even after accounting for age. For all races, homeownership is the highest contributor to net worth, but White households are more likely to have their wealth distributed in stocks and retirement accounts, while Black and Hispanic wealth tends to be concentrated in homeownership.²⁸

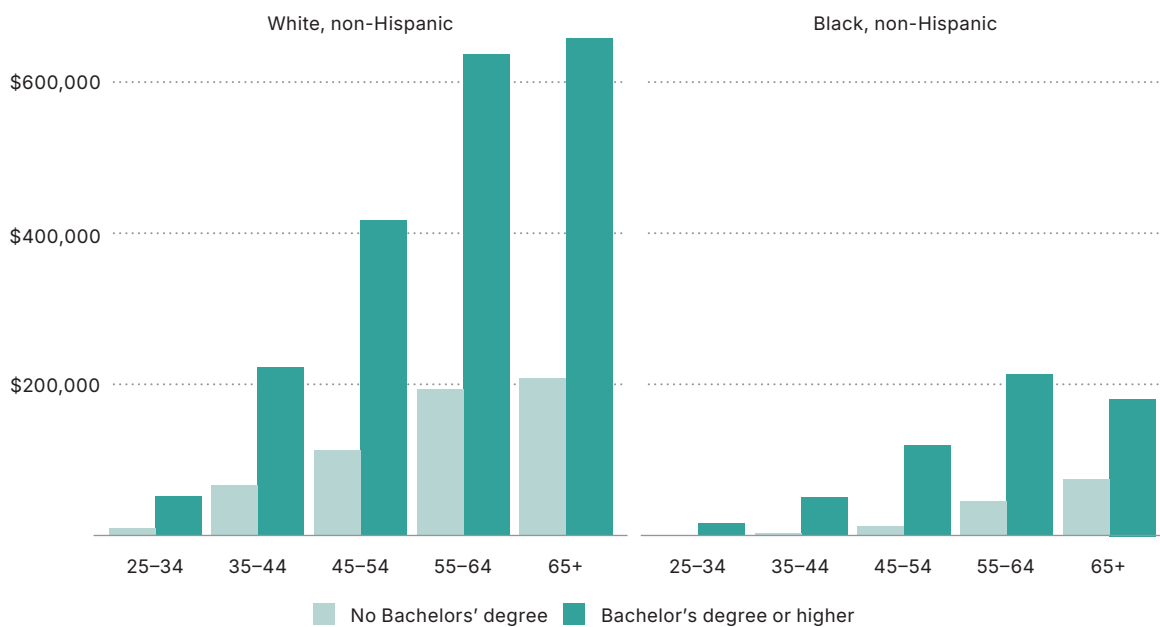
Distribution of net worth by race

Metro New Orleans, 2018



Median net worth by educational attainment

Metro New Orleans, 2018



Source: Estimates by The Data Center, based on 2018 Survey of Income Program Participation and the 2018 American Community Survey. See source notes on page 50 for technical details.

Suburbanization of Poverty

Why is this important?

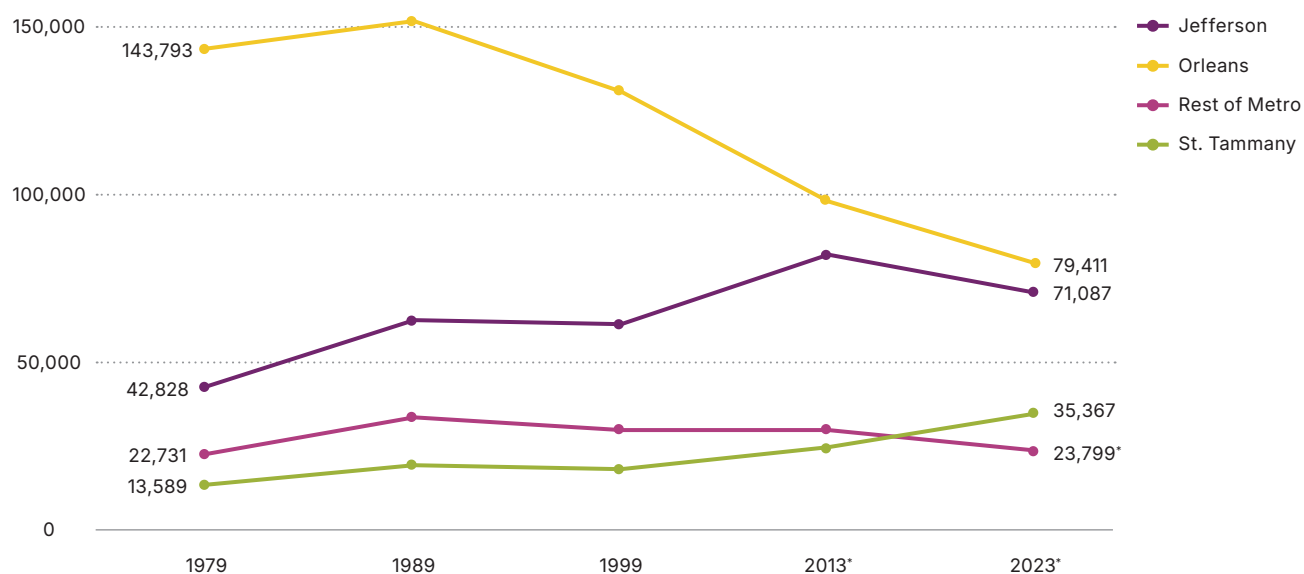
Individuals living below the poverty line consistently encounter greater challenges recovering from disasters.²⁹ The geography of poverty matters because regional policymakers and social service providers must deliver support and resources where the need is greatest.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

While poverty rates have fallen in the city of New Orleans, from 28 percent in 1999 to 23 percent in 2023, poverty rates have grown in the rest of the metro from 13 to 15 percent. In 2023, there were more people living in poverty (about 130,000) in the rest of Metro New Orleans than there were people living in poverty in New Orleans (79,000). Notably, the number of people in poverty has grown by 92 percent in St. Tammany Parish since 2000.

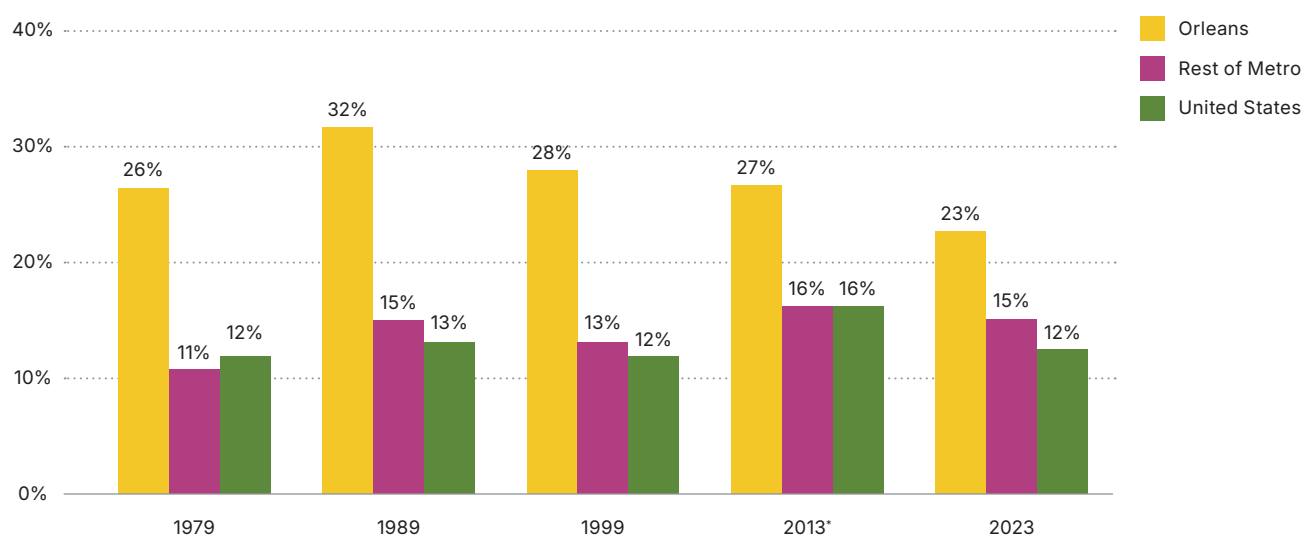
Population living in poverty

For population for whom poverty status is determined



Poverty rate

For population for whom poverty status is determined



Source: IPUMS NHGIS data from U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1980, 1990, 2000, and American Community Survey 2013 and 2023. See source notes on page 51 for technical details.

Philanthropic Capacity

Why is this important?

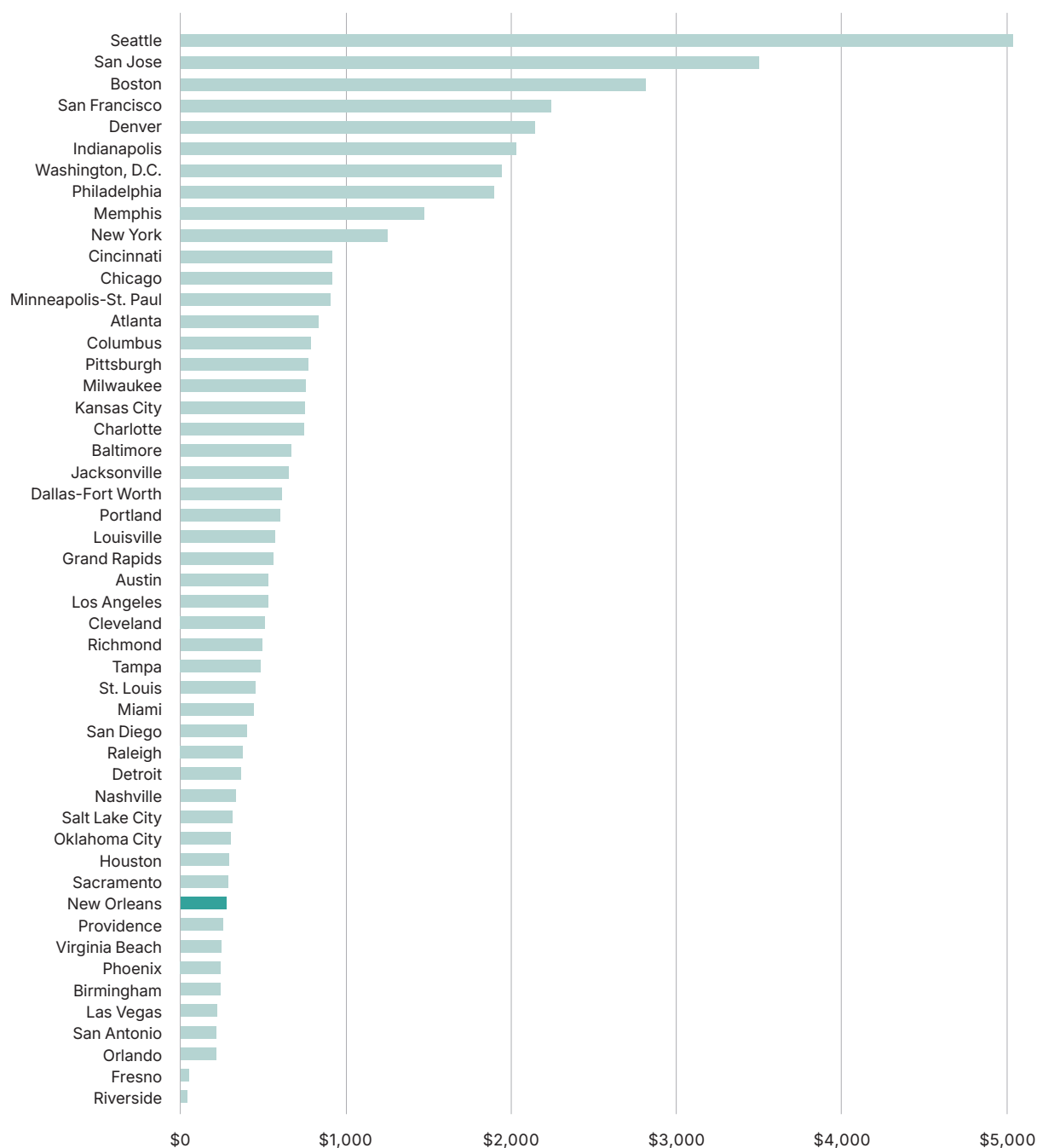
Regional philanthropic wealth can play an important role in providing an adaptive cushion after a shock. Philanthropy can deploy resources rapidly and with fewer bureaucratic hurdles than government agencies.³⁰ Government aid and insurance payments frequently fail to cover the full scope of recovery needs, especially for marginalized communities and small businesses. Philanthropic organizations can help fill these critical gaps by funding efforts such as home reconstruction, livelihood restoration, and support for individuals who may not qualify for other types of assistance.³¹ Many global and national philanthropies also dedicate some portion of their investments in the area where they are located.³² Regardless of where funding was invested, this indicator measures the per capita philanthropic spending among philanthropies based in each metro, and is an indicator of the philanthropic capacity of that metro.

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

This indicator suggests that philanthropic capacity in Metro New Orleans is about half the national average, and ranked 41st among the 50 largest metros. Metro Seattle tops the list, benefitting from the significant philanthropic capacity of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Metro San Jose's top grant maker is the Silicon Valley Community Foundation that gave \$2.5 billion in grants in 2023. The largest grantmaker in Metro New Orleans is the Greater New Orleans Foundation, which made \$29 million in grants in 2023 according to the Foundation Center.

Per capita philanthropic spending for 50 largest metropolitan areas, 2023

Philanthropic spending includes giving to anywhere, for any topic



Source: Foundation Center. See page 12 for a reference map of the 50 largest metros. See source notes on page 51 for technical details.



Photo source: Shutterstock

People

New Orleanians have demonstrated their capacity for community problem solving by substantially reforming a number of key institutions. And New Orleanians' love of their home contributes to a culture of care that is exemplary.

—The New Orleans Index at Twenty

Elderly

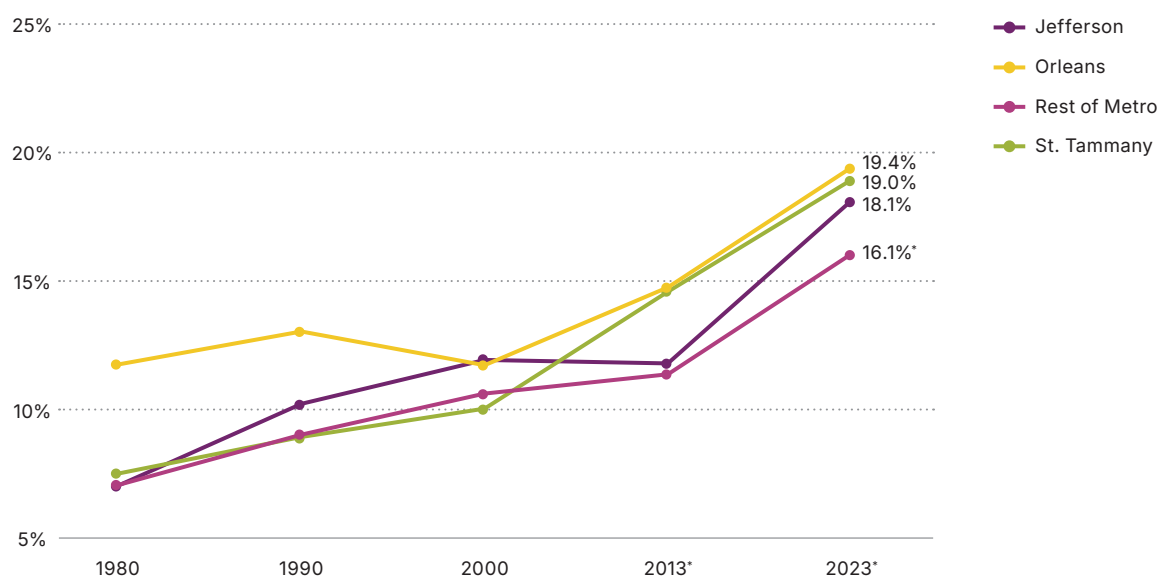
Why is this important?

Many older adults experience mobility issues that can make it difficult to evacuate during a disaster or access essential services afterward. Some older adults may live alone or have limited social support, making them vulnerable during and after a disaster. Cognitive decline can impact an individual's ability to understand disaster warnings, follow evacuation procedures, or make informed decisions during an emergency. Older adults are more susceptible to heatstroke and dehydration. And disasters can disrupt medication supplies, posing a significant risk to older adults who rely on regular medications for their health.³³ About half of the people who died when Hurricane Katrina hit and the levees failed were over 65 years old.³⁴

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

As the baby boomers age, a larger share of the total population is now over 65. Roughly 1 in 5 Metro New Orleans residents are now 65 years old or older. The share exceeds the national average of 17.7 percent in Orleans, St. Tammany, and Jefferson parishes, where almost 20 percent of residents are 65 years or older.

Population over 65 years old



Source: IPUMS NHGIS data from U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 1980, 1990, 2000, and American Community Survey 2013 and 2023. See source notes on page 52 for technical details.

Health Insurance Coverage

Why is this important?

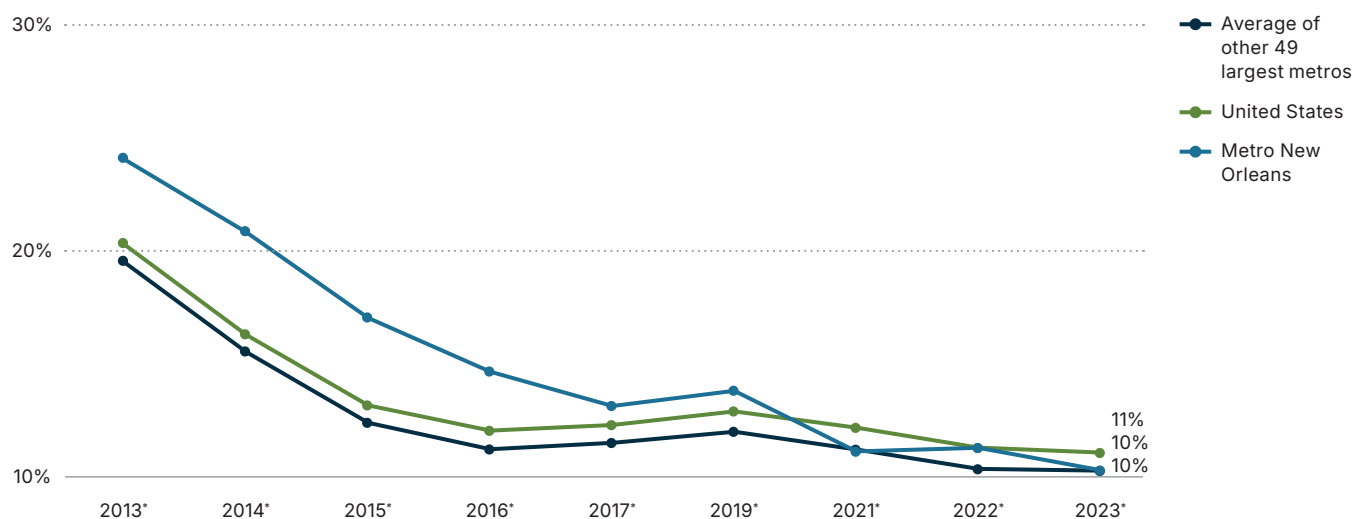
Uninsured adults are more vulnerable to disasters because their limited access to healthcare often leads them to delay or forgo treatment for health conditions, which can be exacerbated during and after disasters.³⁵ Hot and humid days can be especially lethal for adults with health conditions as well as for pregnant women and girls.³⁶ Moreover, disasters frequently cause injuries or illnesses that require medical care, and uninsured individuals are more likely to rely on hospital emergency rooms or outpatient clinics—facilities that may be stretched beyond capacity during such events.³⁷

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

Beginning in 2010, the Affordable Care Act significantly reduced the number of uninsured adults through subsidies for health insurance “marketplaces.”³⁸ Then in 2016, Louisiana expanded Medicaid coverage bringing the share of the working-age population without health insurance in Metro New Orleans down from 24 percent in 2013 to 10 percent in 2023, and is now on par with the other 49 metros and the nation.³⁹

Population without health insurance

19–64 years old



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. See source notes on page 52 for technical details.

Nativity Rate

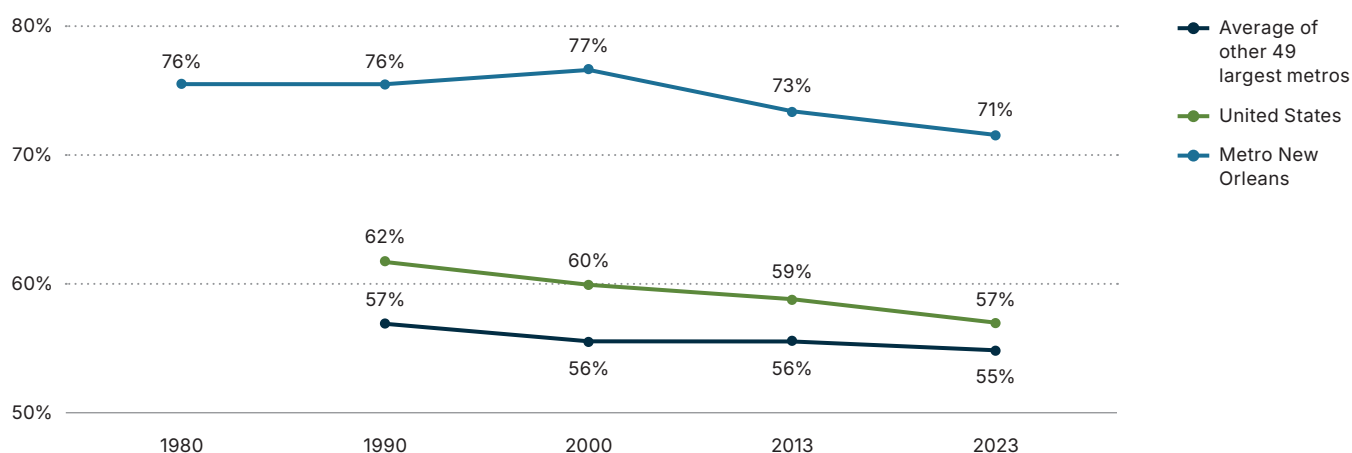
Why is this important?

Place attachment and social capital are closely interconnected and together play a vital role in disaster recovery. A strong emotional connection to a community often strengthens local social networks, which in turn supports mutual aid, information exchange, and coordinated recovery actions.⁴⁰ Place attachment offers psychological stability after a disaster, helping to reduce stress and trauma.⁴¹ Attachment to place strengthens community identity and cohesion, which are essential for collective action during recovery. When residents feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to engage in rebuilding, help neighbors, and advocate for community needs—actions that speed up recovery and build long-term resilience.⁴²

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

In 2023, fully 71 percent of Metro New Orleans residents are native to Louisiana—a nativity rate that is much higher than the national average of 57 percent and higher than the 49 other largest metros. The nativity rate in Metro New Orleans has been consistently higher than other metros. In 1980, before the oil bust hit, when the metro benefited from a more robust economy, the nativity rate of Metro New Orleans residents was even higher at 76 percent.

Population born in state of residence



Source: IPUMS NHGIS data from U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 1980, 1990, 2000, and American Community Survey 2013 and 2023. See page 12 for a reference map of the 50 largest metros. See source notes on page 52 for technical details.

Income Inequality

Why is this important?

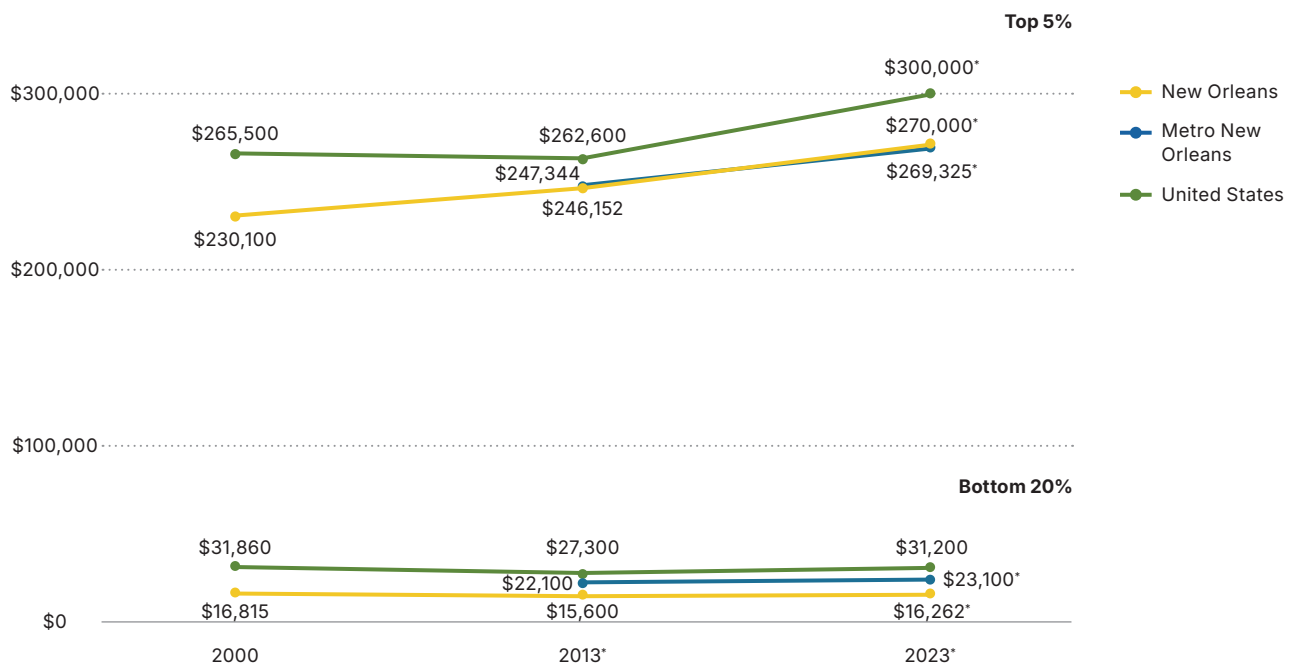
Numerous studies find that income inequality is negatively associated with generalized trust among citizens. In unequal societies, people are less likely to believe they share common interests or destinies with others, particularly those outside their socioeconomic group. This mistrust extends to institutions and authorities, further weakening social cohesion.⁴³ Increasing U.S. income inequality is contributing to fraying of social cohesion nationwide.⁴⁴

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

Metro New Orleans is more unequal than the nation. In Metro New Orleans, the top 5 percent of households earn at least \$269,000 annually, while the bottom 20 percent earn less than \$23,100—well below the national bottom 20 percent threshold of \$31,200. In the city of New Orleans, the bottom 20 percent earn less than \$16,262. Since 2000, in New Orleans, the income threshold for the lowest quintile has not significantly changed from \$16,815 after adjusting for inflation.

Income at 95th percentile and 20th percentile

2023 inflation-adjusted dollars



Source: IPUMS USA data from U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 2000 and American Community Survey 2013 and 2023. See source notes on page 52 for technical details.

Union Membership

Why is this important?

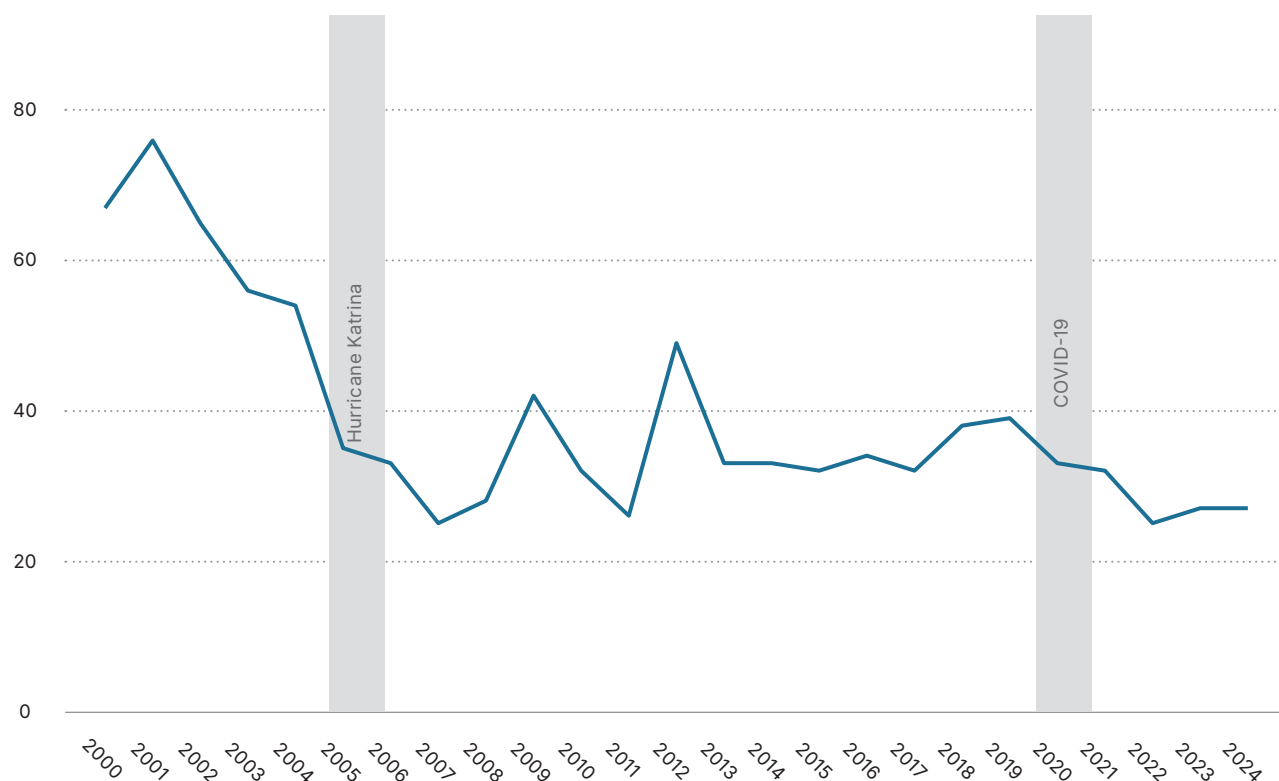
Unions support social cohesion because they create social bonds and build solidarity among diverse groups of workers.⁴⁵ Unions provide a number of social benefits, including an increased likelihood among members of engaging in democratic processes.⁴⁶

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

New Orleans has a strong history of biracial unions.⁴⁷ But union membership has declined locally and nationally for decades for a number of reasons, including decline in manufacturing and rise in service sector work, state laws that make organizing more difficult, aggressive anti-union activities by employers, and declining employee interest.⁴⁸ Since 2000, the number of people covered by union membership in Metro New Orleans has shrunk by more than half, falling from 67,000 in 2000 to 27,000 in 2024.

Workers covered by union membership in thousands

Metro New Orleans



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. See source notes on page 53 for technical details.

Social Clubs

Why is this important?

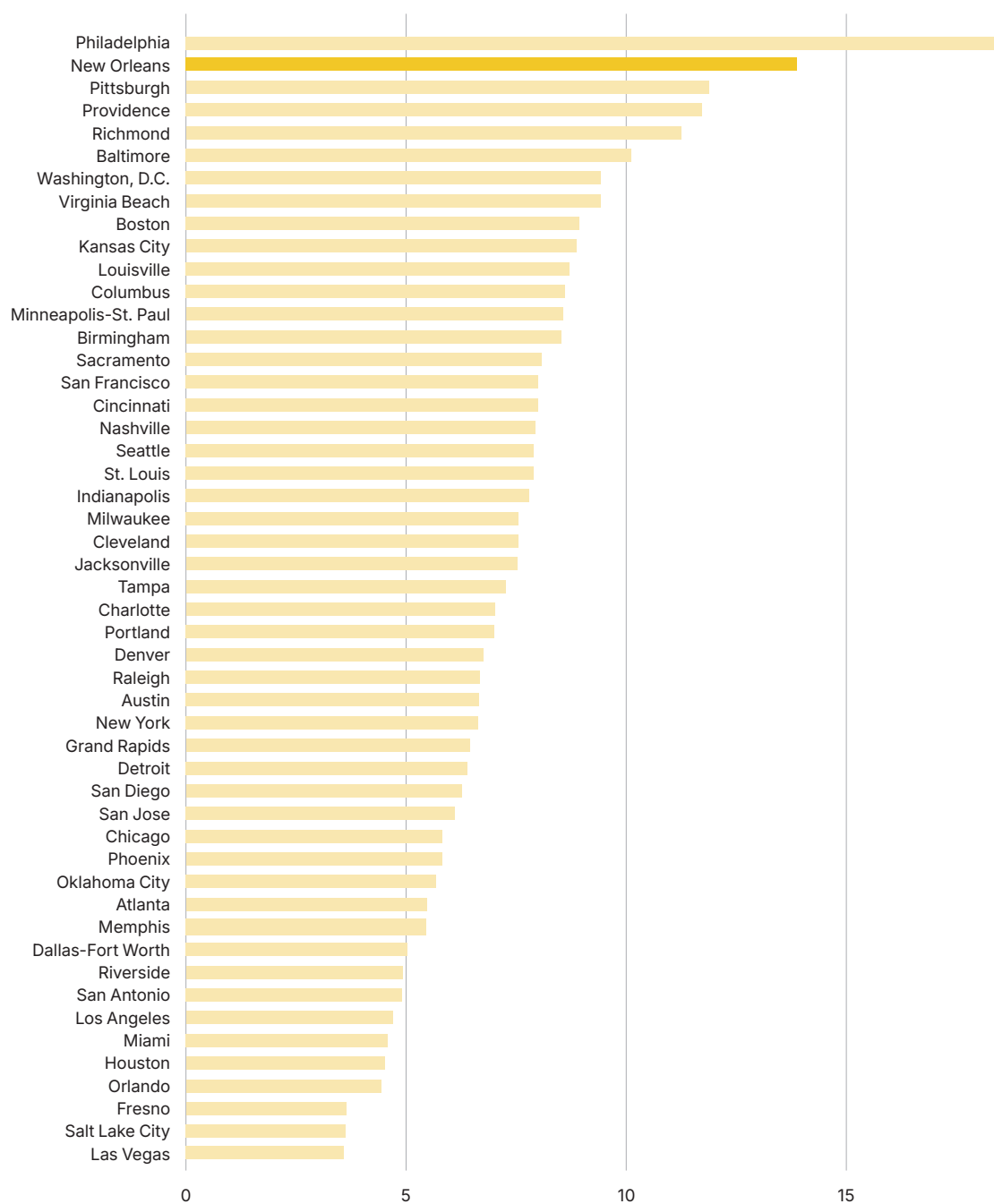
Social clubs play a critical role in fostering social cohesion by facilitating community engagement, expanding interpersonal networks, and enhancing individuals' sense of belonging. Through organized activities and shared social spaces, these clubs create structured opportunities for interaction that nurture mutual trust, reinforce social norms, and cultivate solidarity—key components of a resilient and integrated society.⁴⁹

How is Metro New Orleans doing?

New Orleans is famous for its social aid and pleasure clubs and historical benevolent societies. Though all local clubs may not be captured, data from IRS Form 990s (including Form 990-EZs) suggest that Metro New Orleans, with 172 clubs has among the highest social clubs per capita among the 50 largest metros. Historically, Black New Orleanians formed benevolent societies as well as social aid and pleasure clubs to meet needs like medical and burial insurance, which were denied to them by mainstream institutions. These groups also supported the development of new forms of music, including jazz. During the Jim Crow era, these societies became hubs for political organizing. Homer Plessy, for instance, who famously challenged segregation in the 1896 Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*, was an officer in La Société des Francs Amis, a leading benevolent society.^{50,51} Today's social aid and pleasure clubs continue to demonstrate adaptability in their missions' multi-generational appeal.⁵²

Recreational, pleasure, or social clubs per 100,000 people

50 largest metros, March 2025



Source: Cause IQ, March 2025 data pull. See page 12 for a reference map of the 50 largest metropolitan areas. See source notes on page 53 for technical details.

Technical Notes on Data Sources

Executive Summary

FEMA disaster declarations

Includes all parish- and county-level disaster declarations. For example: Dam/levee breaks, droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, landslides, severe storms, tornadoes, water crises, and biological disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic.

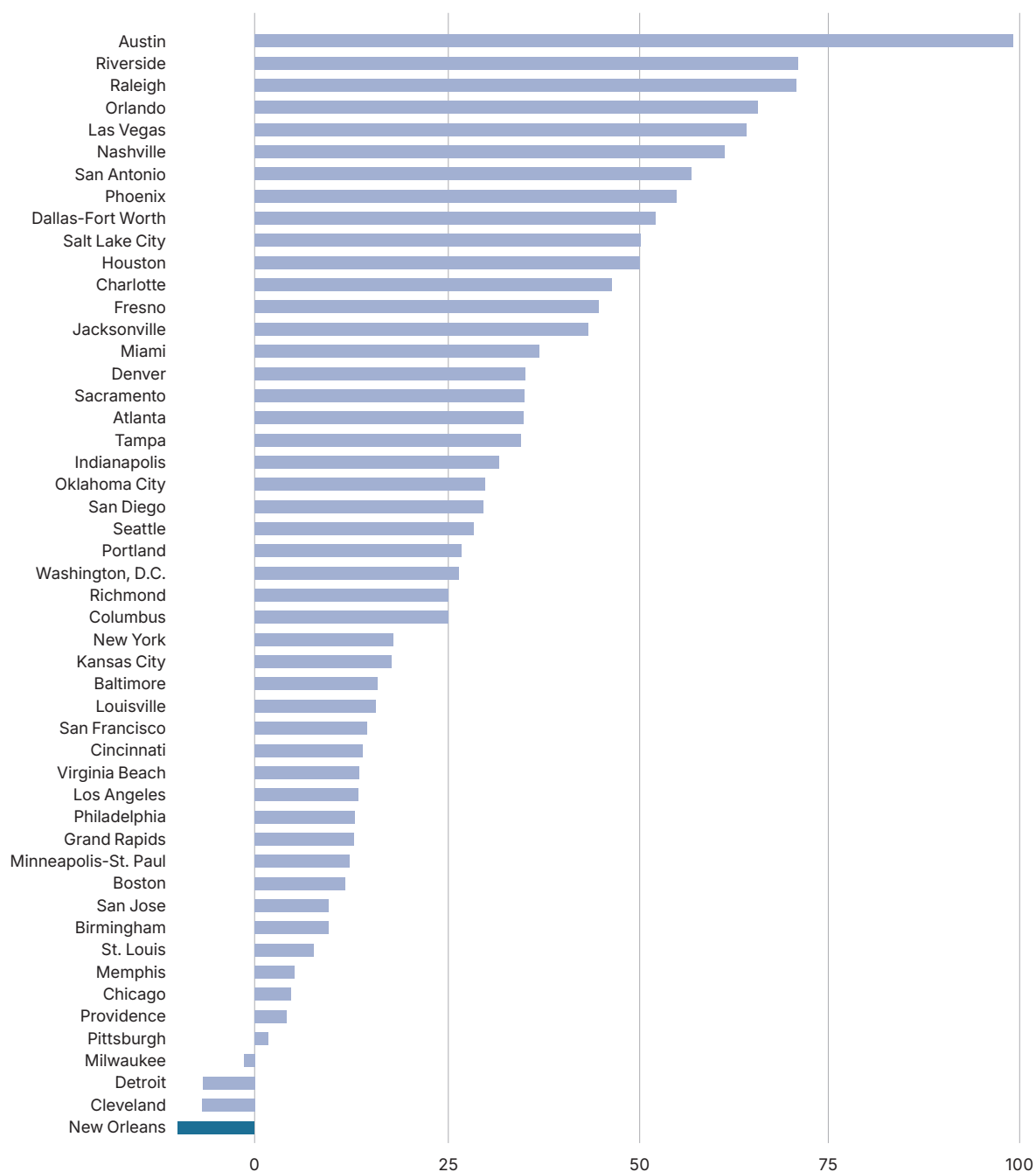
Population and job growth

The 2000, 2010, and 2020 censuses had documented undercounts of renters, young children, and Black and Hispanic adults, and overcounts of homeowners and White adults. The Census Bureau's post-censal annual population estimate totals are developed based on the 2020 decennial count and adds births, subtracts deaths, and estimates out/in migration based on administrative records from the IRS, Medicare, U.S. Department of State, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics measures nonfarm jobs, which is the number of full-time and part-time positions on company payrolls, including civilian government agencies. This definition excludes self-employed, unpaid, and domestic workers. Commercial fishers are typically self-employed and their deckhands often include unpaid family members. Thus, though important to this coastal metro, many commercial fishing jobs are not included in official job estimates. 2024 data is preliminary. For each year included, the New Orleans-Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area.

Job growth and decline, by 50 largest metropolitan areas

2000 to 2024 (annual averages)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Housing and Infrastructure

FORTIFIED roofs

Prepared by the Louisiana state legislative auditor's staff using data from Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) and the U.S. Census Bureau. IBHS data were listed by ZIP Codes, which were translated to parishes using Census ZIP Code Tabulation Areas.

Flood risk

Properties at "major" to "extreme" risk of flooding have at least an 80 percent cumulative probability of being flooded within 30 years (at least a 5 percent chance in any given year). The First Street Foundation Flood Model incorporates flood protection measures (e.g. levees, flood walls, retention ponds, marsh/wetland restoration), multiple types of flooding risks (e.g. tides, rain, riverine and storm surges), as well as future environmental considerations.

Electric infrastructure

"Momentary" interruptions that last five minutes or less are generally omitted. Data reported by utilities using IEEE standard as well as any other method.

Economy and Workforce

Economic diversity

Data on economic diversity comes from the 2021 Chmura diversity index. The formula for the diversity index is the sum of the absolute value of industry employment share in the region, minus national industry employment share, for each 6-digit NAICS. If a region matches the national employment mix, then the value would be "0", indicating that a lower diversity index value means a more economically diverse region. The top 50 largest MSAs reflect 2021 MSA boundaries, and are based on total population from the 2021 American Community Survey.

Drivers of the economy

Data on cluster jobs and wages comes from Lightcast. Lightcast is a private data provider that compiles high-quality employment data by removing the suppressions that are characteristic of publicly available parish- and county-level datasets. In addition to relying on federal datasets, Lightcast uses data from the Louisiana Workforce Commission to improve their measurement of local industries, occupations, wages, skills, education, and training. Lightcast primarily uses the QCEW (Quarterly Census

of Employment and Wages) among other datasets including BEA, County Business Patterns, Current Employment Statistics, and the American Community Survey. Clusters are comprised of 6-digit NAICS codes and are mutually exclusive. Definitions were developed by the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, which assigned NAICS codes to clusters based on multiple linkages between NAICS codes across regions. The 10 strongest industry specializations are identified based on 2023 Location Quotient (LQ) values, a measure of share of jobs in a region compared to that share in the nation. Wages refer to average wages, salaries, and proprietor earnings. They do not include benefits, supplements, or similar non-salary additions. Average wages by industry represent annual figures which may be lower if an industry employs a higher number of part-time workers. Reported job totals represent wage and salary employment only and do not include self-employed individuals. Average wages reflect a weighted average based on the number of jobs in each industry group or cluster. For the “Hospitality and Tourism” cluster, wages exclude the 6-digit NAICS code, 711211, “Sports Teams and Clubs.” For each year included, the New Orleans–Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area.

Local-serving clusters

Data on cluster jobs and wages comes from Lightcast. Lightcast is a private data provider that compiles high quality employment data by removing the suppressions that are characteristic of publicly available parish- and county-level datasets. In addition to relying on federal datasets, Lightcast uses data from the Louisiana Workforce Commission to improve their measurement of local industries, occupations, wages, skills, education, and training. Lightcast primarily uses the QCEW (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages) among other datasets including: BEA, County Business Patterns, Current Employment Statistics, and the American Community Survey. Clusters are comprised of 6-digit NAICS codes and are mutually exclusive. Cluster definitions were developed by the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project, which assigned NAICS codes to clusters based on multiple linkages between NAICS codes across regions. Wages refer to average wages, salaries, and proprietor earnings. They do not include benefits, supplements, or similar non-salary additions. Average wages by industry represent annual figures which may be lower if an industry employs a higher number of part-time workers. Reported job totals represent wage and salary employment only and do not include self-employed individuals. Average wages reflect a weighted average based on the number of jobs in each industry group or cluster. The clusters shown include the top 10 local-serving and government clusters by jobs in 2023. For each year included, the New Orleans–Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area.

Educated workforce

Educational attainment is presented for the adult population 25 years and older. “At least some college” reflects any amount of college education, and is inclusive of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher. For each year included, the New Orleans–Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. In 2023,

differences in educational attainment between the U.S. and Metro New Orleans are not significant at the 95 percent confidence interval. Statistical tests were not performed on the 2000 data for “Average of other 49 largest metros”, though sample sizes are large when pooling data across geographies, which supports the reliability of the estimates.

Internet access

“Lacking internet access” means the household has no internet subscription, no cellular data plan, and no access to the internet without a subscription (such as through property-wide Wi-Fi service in an apartment building). For each year included, the New Orleans–Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. For 2023, differences in internet access between Metro New Orleans and the U.S., and between Metro New Orleans and the average of the other 49 largest metros, are not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval. In Metro New Orleans, the difference in internet access over time from 2022 to 2023 is not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval.

Wealth

Financial security

Includes all residential and commercial National Flood Insurance Program policies in-force as of May 2021 and Oct 2024.

Household net worth

The Data Center used statistical models to predict the percentile ranking of households in the national wealth distribution, based on the 2018 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the 2018 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS-PUMS). Assets and debts are predicted based on information reported in both surveys: common demographic and socioeconomic measures, income and work status, homeownership and home values, and state and metropolitan status. The results are used to generate estimates for the population of the Metro New Orleans. The estimates are poststratified to be representative of the Metro New Orleans, based on more reliable and more geographically detailed estimates for local population subgroups derived from ACS-PUMS. Additional steps are taken to address the skewed distribution of assets and debts. These steps and other details of the predictive model and the procedure for generating local estimates are in the companion technical paper, which we offer both for transparency and as a contribution to broader efforts to make information on wealth gaps more locally relevant and more actionable. Data reflects 2018 dollars.

Suburbanization of poverty

For each year included, the New Orleans-Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. The 2013 ACS data reflects incomes for 2012–2013. The 2023 ACS data reflects incomes for 2022–2023. The 1980, 1990, and 2000 Decennial Census data represents income from the previous calendar year.

Changes in poverty estimates between 2013 and 2023 are not statistically significant for the rest of Metro New Orleans, but changes over time between 2013 and 2023 for Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Tammany are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval.

In 2013, the difference between St. Tammany and the rest of Metro New Orleans was not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval. In 2023, differences between Jefferson and Orleans, and between St. Tammany and the rest of Metro New Orleans are not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval.

Changes in the poverty rate between 2013 and 2023 are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval for Orleans and the United States, but not for the rest of Metro New Orleans. In 2013, the difference in poverty rates between the United States and the rest of Metro New Orleans is not statistically significant.

Philanthropic capacity

Data on philanthropic support comes from the Foundation Center. Foundation Center is the leading source of philanthropic information with the most comprehensive database on United States grantmakers and grants. The Foundation Center compiles their data from IRS information returns, grantmaker websites, annual reports, printed application guidelines, the philanthropic press, and more than 30 other sources. The Foundation Center only has data on foundation grants, not individual donations. Per capita philanthropic spending is the total amount of giving to anywhere from each of the top 50 most populous MSAs, divided by the total population of that MSA. Total population comes from ACS 2023 1-year estimates. The top 50 MSAs are based on 2023 MSA boundaries, except that the New Orleans-Metairie MSA reflects the consistent 8-parish metro area, including St. Tammany Parish.

People

Elderly

For each year included, the New Orleans-Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. The difference over time between 2013 and 2023 is not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval for the rest of Metro New Orleans.

In 2013, differences between Jefferson and Orleans, and Jefferson and St. Tammany are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval, but other geographic comparisons are not statistically significant in 2013. In 2023, differences between Jefferson and Orleans are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval, and no other comparisons between geographies are statistically significant in 2023.

Health insurance coverage

For each year included, the New Orleans-Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. After 2015, year-over-year changes are generally not statistically significant for the U.S. and Metro New Orleans, with a few exceptions, specifically, changes from 2015–2016 and 2019–2021 in Metro New Orleans. For the 49-metro average, year-over-year changes are statistically significant in every period except 2022–2023.

Comparing across geographies, differences between Metro New Orleans and the U.S. are statistically significant from 2013 through 2016, but not in any year from 2017 to 2023. Differences between Metro New Orleans and the average of the other 49 largest metros are statistically significant through 2017 but not from 2019 to 2023. Differences between the U.S. and the 49-metro average are statistically significant from 2019 to 2022 but not in 2013–2017 or in 2023.

Nativity rate

For each year included, the New Orleans-Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. Statistical tests were not performed on the 2000 data for “Average of other 49 largest metros”, though sample sizes are large when pooling data across geographies, which supports the reliability of the estimates.

Income inequality

For each year included, the New Orleans-Metairie MSA includes St. Tammany Parish, reflecting a consistent 8-parish metro area. Metro-level upper quintile income data is not available before the 2006 American Community Survey. Data on income is adjusted to reflect 2023 dollars.

Differences over time for New Orleans are not statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence interval for either the 20th or 95th percentiles of income. Differences between 2013 and 2023 for Metro New Orleans are also not statistically significant for either percentile, though changes from 2000 to 2023 are statistically significant. Differences over time for the U.S. are statistically significant.

In 2013, differences between New Orleans, Metro New Orleans, and the U.S. are statistically significant at the 20th percentile, but not significant at the 95th percentile. In 2023, differences between geographies remain statistically significant at the 20th percentile. At the 95th percentile, differences between New Orleans and both Metro New Orleans and the U.S. are not statistically significant, while the difference between Metro New Orleans and the U.S. is statistically significant.

Union membership

Accessed from unionstats.com.

Social clubs

Data represents all tax-exempt organizations that file a Form 990, Form 990-EZ, or Form 990-PF with the IRS. The data was collected and aggregated from OCR'd paper tax returns, XML e-file tax returns, IRS-provided extract, the Business Master File, and Cause IQ proprietary algorithm for data cleaning, categorization, classification, analytics, etc. This category corresponds to the "N50: Recreational, Pleasure, or Social Club" National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) code. Cause IQ determines NTEEs for organizations based on its proprietary algorithm. The total number of clubs in this category may not reflect organizations located just outside of the MSA boundaries due to the nature of data collection by Cause IQ. Additionally, it may not capture entities that are well established but informally organized, or others that—by local convention—may be commonly considered social clubs but classified by other criteria.

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