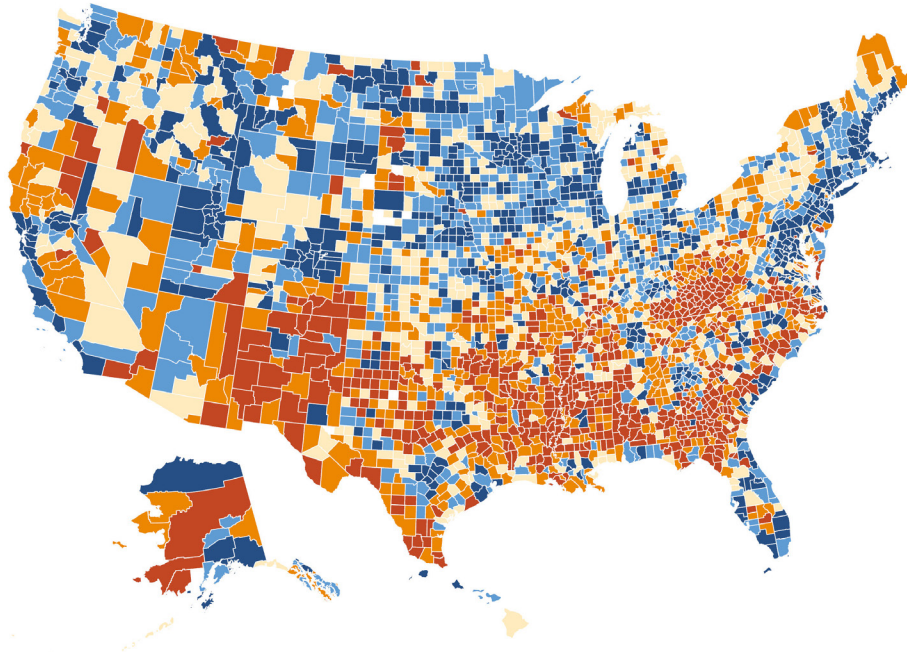


Sorting America:

A novel socioeconomic mapping of the United States

National statistics too often obscure the underlying diversity of local economies and the evolving nature of American communities. Here EIG merges insights from its own Distressed Communities Index with the American Communities Project cultural classifications to examine how geography, society, and economy intersect in the United States.

Distressed Communities Index

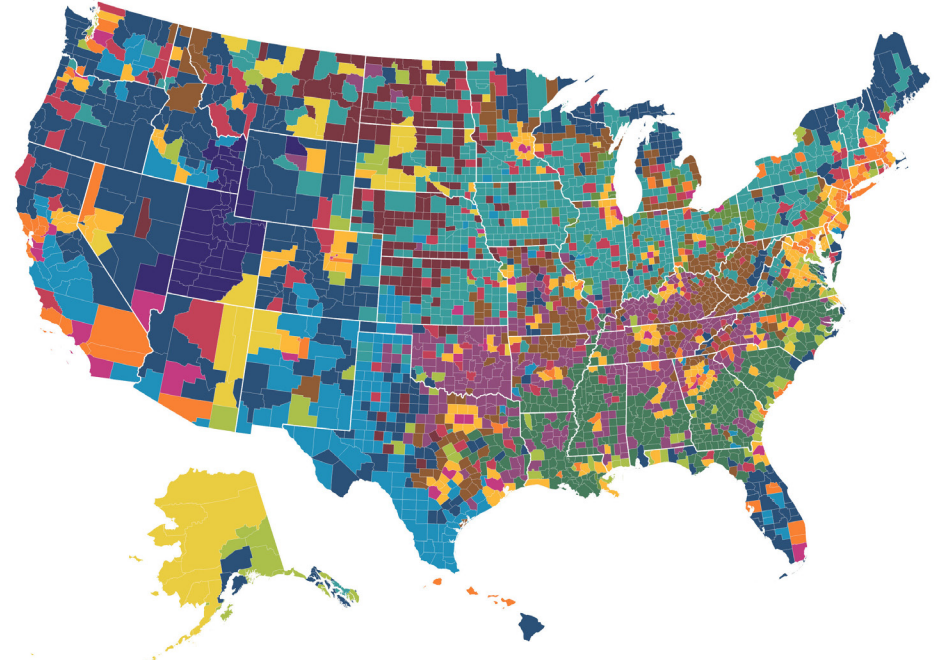


● Prosperous ● Comfortable ● Mid-tier ● At risk ● Distressed

The Distressed Communities Index (DCI) combines seven complementary indicators of economic well-being into a single metric. It covers poverty, education, worklessness, vacancy, incomes, jobs, and businesses, and it groups counties into five quintiles ranging from prosperous to distressed based on their relative performance.

To learn more about the DCI,
visit eig.org/dci

American Communities Project



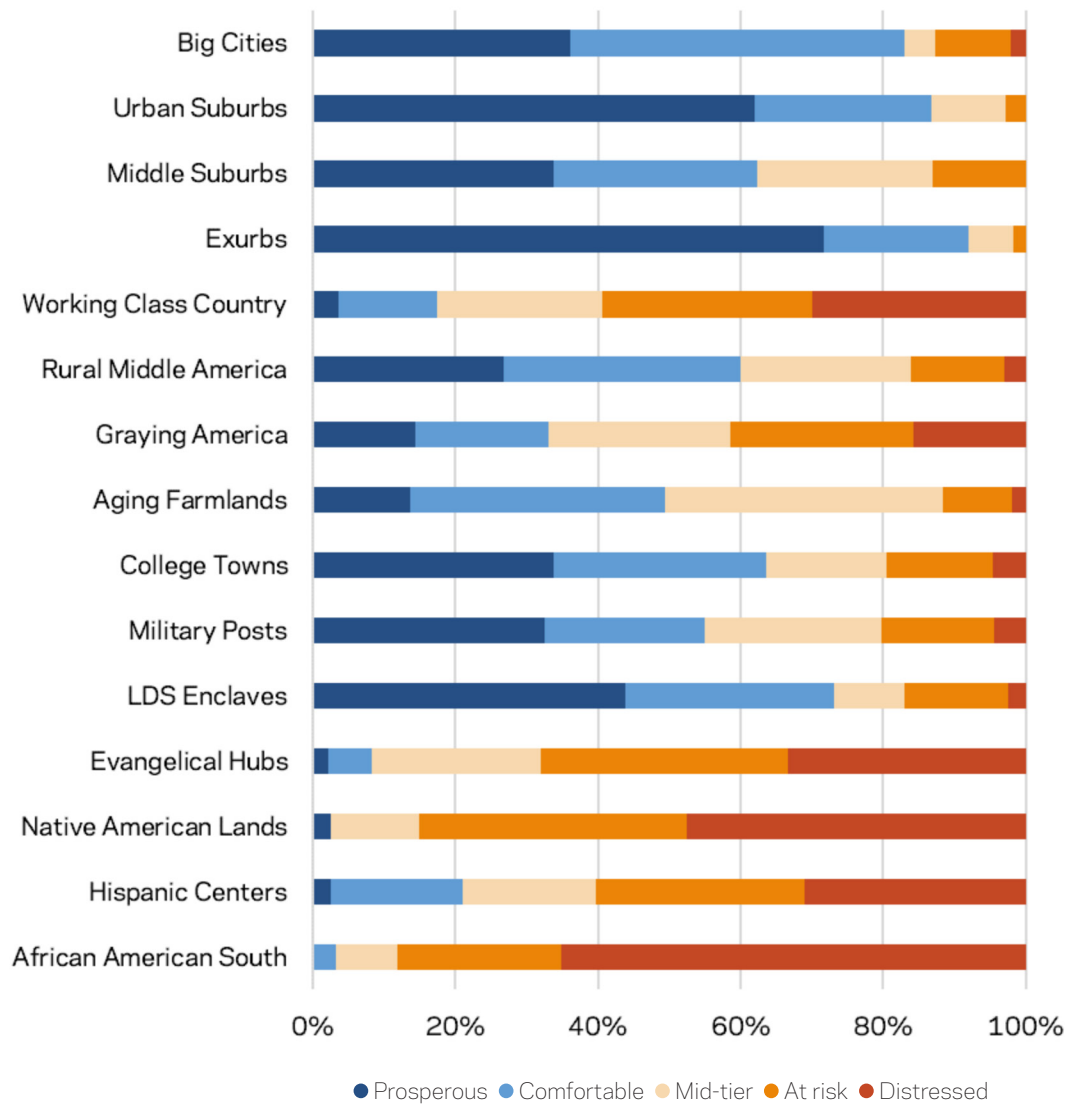
● African American South ● Exurbs ● Military Posts
● Aging Farmlands ● Graying America ● Native American Lands
● Big Cities ● Hispanic Centers ● Rural Middle America
● College Towns ● LDS Enclaves ● Urban Suburbs
● Evangelical Hubs ● Middle Suburbs ● Working Class Country

Based at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, the American Communities Project classifies counties into 15 types based on a range of social, demographic, and economic indicators ranging from population density to religious affiliation and membership in the military.

To learn more about the ACP,
visit americancommunities.org

Classifying America

Mapping EIG's Distressed Communities Index onto the American Communities Project county classifications



Combining the DCI's economic insights with the ACP's social and cultural lens yields a number of interesting findings:

- **Minority-heavy counties** are most likely to be economically distressed, pointing to serious structural inequalities. Yet whiter **Working Class Country** and **Evangelical Hubs** are no longer that far behind.
- The **Exurbs** dominate the map of American prosperity, but **Big Cities** and **Urban Suburbs** carry their weight and point to the increasingly metropolitan nature of prosperity.
- Extraordinarily, **no Suburban or Exurban** county in the United States falls into the bottom one-fifth in terms of economic well-being.
- **Rural Middle America**, stretching across the northern heartland, manages to sustain relatively high levels of well-being.
- **College Towns and Military Posts** exhibit surprisingly similar profiles.
- True to character, American communities—just like Americans themselves—often defy neat classification. **Graying America**, for example, captures depopulating rural areas, recreation hotspots, and retirement destinations, and its counties fall almost evenly across the five tiers of well-being.