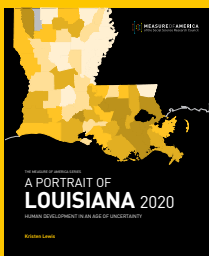
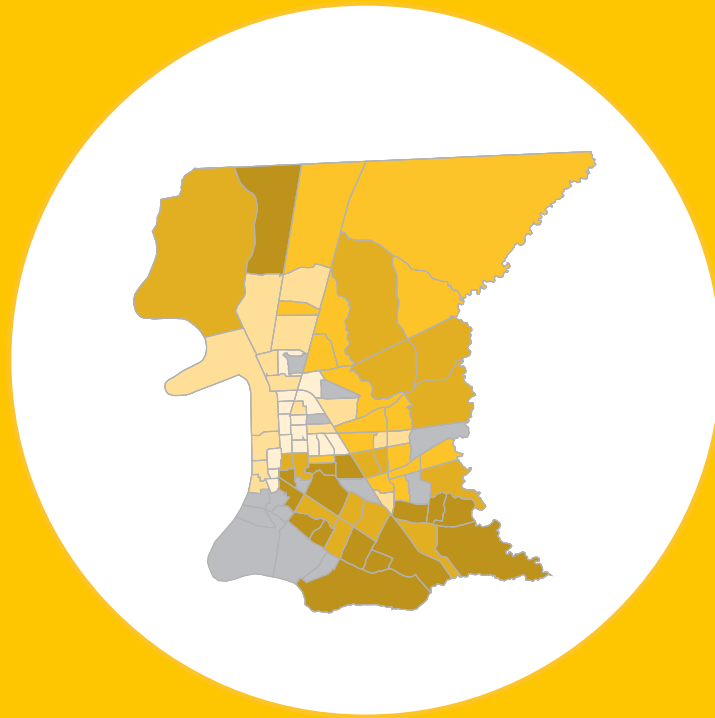


# City Close-Up on Baton Rouge

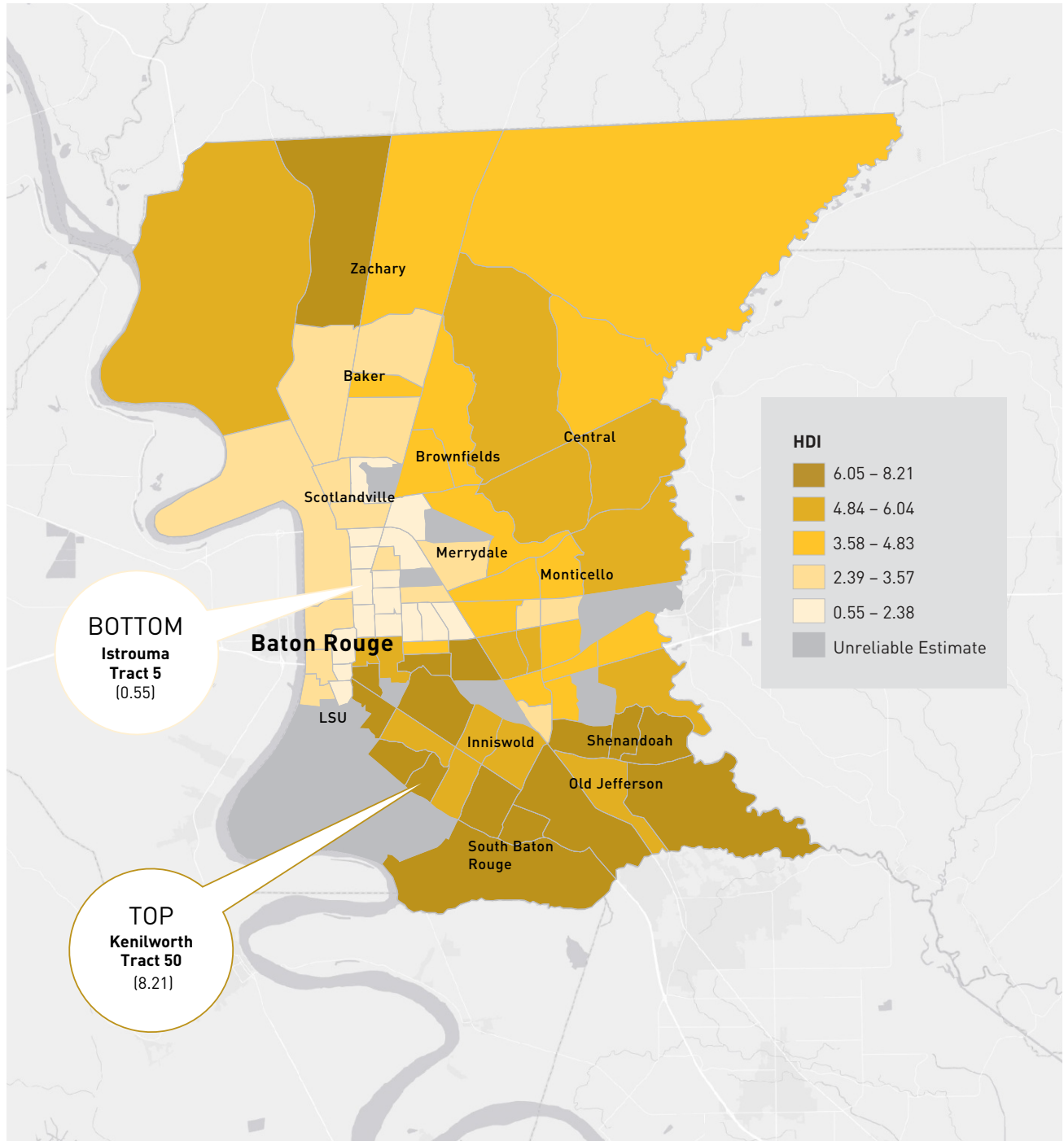


EXCERPT FROM

**A PORTRAIT OF LOUISIANA 2020**  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY

Close-Up on

# Baton Rouge



## East Baton Rouge Parish

HDI  
4.37

Life  
Expectancy  
74.2  
years

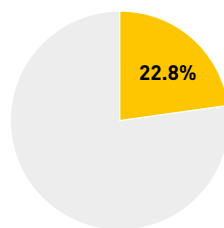
Education  
Index  
5.58

Median  
Earnings  
\$30,615

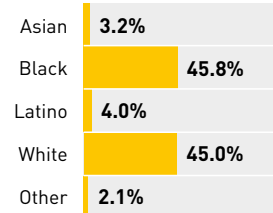
## TOTAL POPULATION

444,094

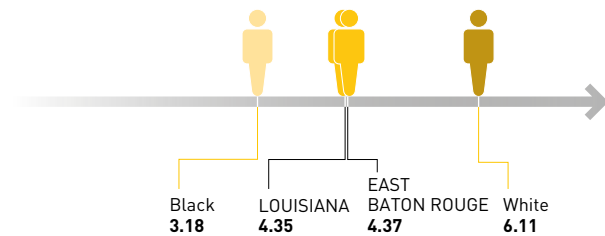
## POPULATION UNDER 18



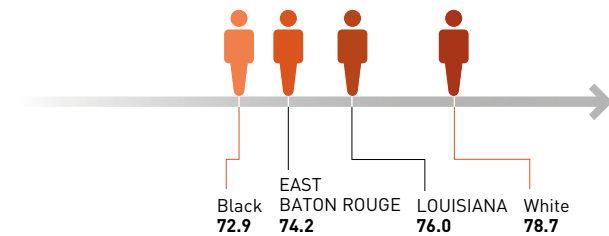
## RACE &amp; ETHNICITY

YOUTH  
DISCONNECTION  
10.6%

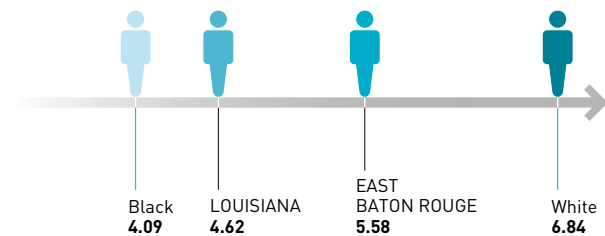
## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX



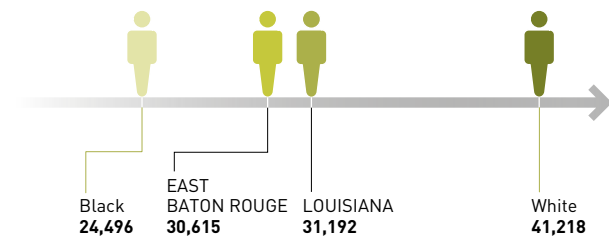
## LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)



## EDUCATION INDEX



## MEDIAN PERSONAL EARNINGS (\$)



# Understanding Human Development

**The American Human Development Index (HDI)** is a composite measure of well-being and access to opportunity made up of health, education, and earnings indicators. The Index is expressed on a scale from 0 to 10. Built on the human development framework pioneered at the United Nations by scholars like Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, Measure of America's HDI calculations provide a snapshot of community well-being, reveal inequalities between groups, allow for tracking change over time, and provide a tool for holding elected officials accountable. Broken down by race and ethnicity, by gender, and by a variety of geographies, the Index shows how communities across Louisiana are faring relative to their neighbors in the state and across the country.

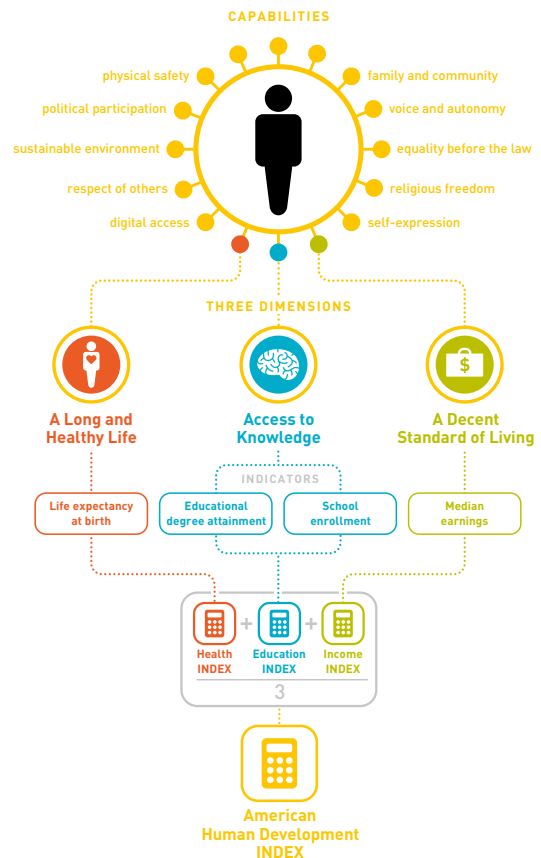
While not a component of the HDI, Measure of America also calculates national and local **youth disconnection rates**, which measure the share of 16- to 24-year-olds who are neither working nor enrolled in school. The youth disconnection rate is a bellwether indicator of community well-being and opportunity. It tells us which groups of teenagers and young adults have the chance to lay the groundwork for a freely chosen, flourishing adulthood and which ones face numerous obstacles in their transition to adulthood.

**A Long and Healthy Life** is measured using life expectancy at birth, which is calculated using data from the Louisiana Department of Public Health, population data from the US Census Bureau, and USALEEP data for census tract-level estimates.

**Access to Knowledge** is measured using data on school enrollment for children and young people ages 3 to 24 and educational degree attainment for adults 25 and older from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.

**A Decent Standard of Living** is measured using median personal earnings of all full- and part-time workers ages 16 and older from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.

**Youth Disconnection** is calculated by Measure of America using data from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.



# Human Development in Baton Rouge

East Baton Rouge is the ninth-highest-scoring parish in the state, with an HDI score of 4.37. This parish stands out for its strong educational outcomes—only three parishes have higher Education Index scores. Overall, 35 percent of adults in East Baton Rouge—home to the largest university in Louisiana and the state capital—have a bachelor’s degree, far higher than the statewide rate of 24 percent. A closer look reveals deep racial divisions within the parish, however. Just 19 percent of Black adults have a bachelor’s degree, compared to 47 percent of white adults.

Racial inequities extend beyond education. White residents of East Baton Rouge live six years longer than Black residents, on average. The typical white worker earns \$17,000 more than the typical Black worker each year.

By census tract, HDI scores within the parish range from 0.55 in Istrouma to 8.21 in Kenilworth. This translates to a fifteen-year gap in life expectancy, a \$30,000 difference in median earnings, and a 64-percentage-point gap in bachelor’s degree attainment. In general, the highest-scoring areas are those in the southern portion of the parish, while the lowest-scoring areas are concentrated just to the north and east of downtown. Baton Rouge is very racially segregated, and the geographic pattern of HDI scores across the parish mirrors its racial divisions.

These stark racial and well-being disparities are reflected in the built environment. The tract with the lowest earnings that isn’t home to a university is on the eastern side of Old South Baton Rouge and contains the historic Lincoln Theater on Myrtle Walk. Residents there earn just \$14,000. The vacant lots and cracked pavement are a far cry from the tree-lined streets of Kleinert Terrace and Zeeland Place, just a half mile away, where median personal earnings are over \$50,000.



## Health

- The average life expectancy in the parish is 74.2 years. As is the case across the state and country, women live longer than men (78.9 years vs. 72.8 years), and white residents live longer than Black residents (78.7 years vs. 72.9 years).
- East Baton Rouge Parish is home to many of the petrochemical plants that line the Mississippi River chemical corridor—more ominously known as “Cancer Alley.” Despite decades of struggle by affected communities, toxic, cancer-causing pollutants continue to be released in enormous quantities into the air and water of south Louisiana. Low-income communities are hardest hit (see: **Cancer Alley: The Continued Struggle for a Healthy Home**).



## Education

- High Education Index scores relative to other parishes are driven by the presence of Louisiana State University, as well as the concentration of highly educated workers drawn to the political and economic hub of the state capital.
- The parish's high Education Index score is rooted in particularly strong educational outcomes among white residents, which obscure the much lower scores of Black residents. Just 4 percent of white adults did not complete high school compared to 15 percent of Black adults. Nearly half of white adults have a bachelor's degree compared to one-fifth of Black adults.
- Disparities in educational outcomes are often tied to disparities in funding for public schools, caused in turn by residential segregation. Recent secession movements from public school districts in Baton Rouge threaten to deepen racial disparities (see: [A Tale in Black and White—Education in Baton Rouge](#)).



## Earnings

- Despite high levels of educational attainment, median earnings for all workers in East Baton Rouge Parish are slightly lower than the statewide median.
- Despite nearly identical levels of educational attainment, women earn \$14,000 less than men.
- Residents of the census tracts in the southern region of the parish earn much more than people in the rest of the parish; Kenilworth residents, for example, earn double the median earnings of Louisiana as a whole (\$61,000), while the lowest-earning non-university tract in Old South Baton Rouge earns less than half of the state average (\$14,000).

**TABLE 1 Human Development Index by Race and Ethnicity and by Gender in Baton Rouge**

	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)	AT LEAST BACHELOR'S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)	EDUCATION INDEX (out of 10)	MEDIAN EARNINGS (\$)
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<b>4.35</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>76.4</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>31,192</b>
<b>East Baton Rouge</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>74.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>5.58</b>	<b>30,615</b>
Men	4.70	72.8	10.9	33.4	12.4	76.6	5.36	39,657
Women	4.62	78.9	9.2	35.2	12.7	77.8	5.64	25,420
Black	3.18	72.9	15.3	19.1	7.3	74.4	4.09	24,496
White	6.11	78.7	4.1	47.1	16.3	80.9	6.84	41,218

**DATA SOURCES:**

**Life Expectancy:** Measure of America calculations using mortality data obtained with special agreement from the Louisiana Department of Public Health and population data from CDC Wonder and the US Census Bureau.

**Education:** Parish estimates use 2012–2017 data; estimates by gender and by race and ethnicity use 2011–2017 data.

**Earnings:** US Census Bureau ACS, 2014–2018.

**Note:** Because men have higher scores on the income component of the index and women have higher scores on the health component, the HDI score of the overall population is lower than that of either men or women separately.

# Youth Disconnection in Baton Rouge

We were able to calculate the youth disconnection rate for fifty-five of the state's sixty-four parishes, and East Baton Rouge Parish has the third-lowest rate of youth disconnection; 10.6 percent of young people ages 16 to 24 are neither working nor in school, compared to 16.4 percent in the state as a whole. There is considerable variation by race and region, however. The disconnection rate in the northern portion of the parish, 15.5 percent, is twice the rate in southern portion, 7.6 percent. Racial gaps in the youth disconnection rate in the central region of the parish, which includes most of the city of Baton Rouge, are particularly glaring. The overall disconnection rate is 9.7 percent, but the rate for Black young people is nearly double that, 18.1 percent.

**TABLE 2 Human Development and Youth Disconnection in Baton Rouge**

PUMA	HDI	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)	AT LEAST BACHELOR'S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)	SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)	EDUCATION INDEX (out of 10)	MEDIAN EARNINGS (\$)	YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)	BLACK YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)	WHITE YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)
East Baton Rouge Parish (South)	5.90	79.2	6.0	46.6	16.3	78.5	6.51	38,292	7.6*		
Baton Rouge City	4.18	74.9	10.5	35.4	13.9	76.3	5.50	27,333	9.7	18.1	
East Baton Rouge Parish (North)	3.88	74.2	13.3	20.7	7.2	77.1	4.50	28,922	15.5	17.5	

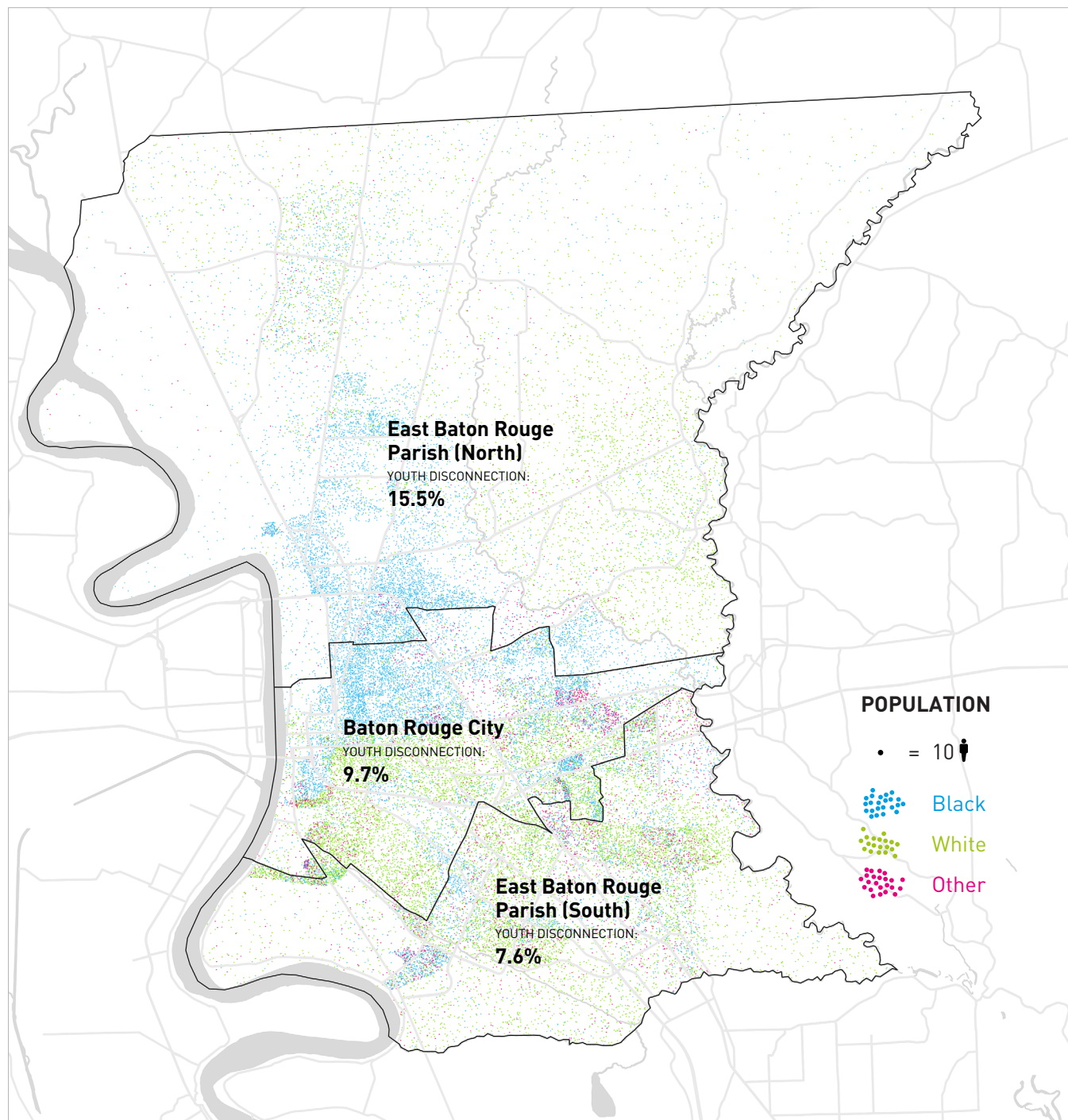
**DATA SOURCES:**

**Life Expectancy:** Measure of America calculations using mortality data obtained with special agreement from the Louisiana Department of Public Health and population data from CDC Wonder and the US Census Bureau, 2013–2017.

**Education, Earnings, and Youth Disconnection:** Measure of America calculations using US Census Bureau ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, 2014–2018.

**Note:** The youth disconnection estimate for East Baton Rouge Parish (South) is unreliable but has been included for reference.

For an exploration of youth disconnection rates state- and nationwide, the potential impact of Covid-19, and the role of disconnection in youth voter turnout, check out our recent report at [measureofamerica.org/DYInteractive](https://measureofamerica.org/DYInteractive).

**MAP 3 Residential Segregation and Youth Disconnection Are Closely Linked****NOTE:**

For this report, Measure of America calculated the youth disconnection rate by public use microdata area (PUMA). PUMAs are geographies defined by the Census Bureau. They are contiguous areas with populations of at least 100,000 people, a population sufficiently large to allow for statistical reliability for a wide range of indicators. Louisiana has thirty-four PUMAs.



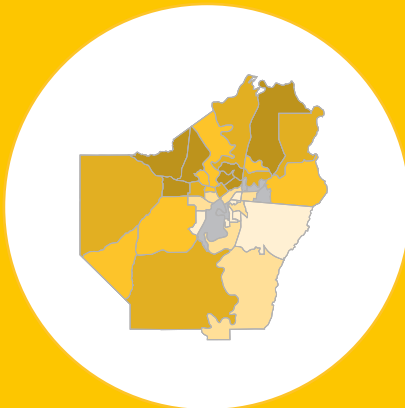
The **MEASURE OF AMERICA** Series:

# A PORTRAIT OF **LOUISIANA** 2020

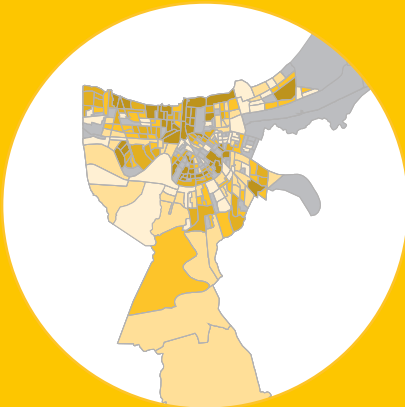
## ADDITIONAL CITY CLOSE-UPS



Shreveport



Monroe



New Orleans