City Close-Up on New Orleans

EXEMPLARY FROM
A PORTRAIT OF LOUISIANA 2020
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AN AGE OF UNCERTAINTY
Close-Up on

New Orleans
### Orleans Parish

**HDI** 4.48

**Life Expectancy** 74.4 years

**Education Index** 5.79

**Median Earnings** $30,774

**Total Population** 389,648

**Population Under 18** 20.2%

**Race & Ethnicity**
- Asian: 2.9%
- Black: 59.0%
- Latino: 5.5%
- White: 30.6%
- Other: 2.0%

**Youth Disconnection** 15.5%

### Jefferson Parish

**HDI** 4.38

**Life Expectancy** 75.3 years

**Education Index** 4.72

**Median Earnings** $32,654

**Total Population** 435,300

**Population Under 18** 22%

**Race & Ethnicity**
- Asian: 4.1%
- Black: 26.2%
- Latino: 14.4%
- White: 53.1%
- Other: 2.2%

**Youth Disconnection** 13.2%

### Orleans & Jefferson Parishes

**Human Development Index**

- Black (Jefferson): 2.68
- Black (Orleans): 3.44
- Louisiana: 4.35
- Jefferson: 4.38
- Orleans: 4.48
- White (Jefferson): 4.84
- White (Orleans): 6.94

_A Portrait of Louisiana 2020_
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 New Orleans

Orleans Parish is the sixth-highest-scoring parish in the state; nearby Jefferson Parish ranks eighth. Making up the majority of the Greater New Orleans Metropolitan Area, these two populous parishes benefit from the educational and employment opportunities that cluster around major cultural and economic hubs. As is true for most urban areas, however, racial and ethnic disparities are striking.

Although Black residents of Orleans Parish have a higher HDI than Black residents of the state as a whole, the exceedingly high white HDI score in Orleans Parish produces the highest white-Black HDI gap among the urban parishes we studied. White residents of Orleans Parish live, on average, six years longer than Black residents, are 3.5 times as likely to have a bachelor’s degree, and earn $18,000 more per year.

Jefferson Parish fares worse on average than its metropolitan neighbor. Black residents of Jefferson Parish earn $5,500 less each year than Black residents of Orleans. Although white residents of Jefferson Parish live, on average, four years longer than Black residents, are twice as likely to have a bachelor’s degree, and earn $12,000 more each year, they score lower than their white counterparts in New Orleans.

The HDI scores in the Orleans/Jefferson Parish area range from 1.18 in New Orleans’ Fischer Development to 8.79 in Lakeview, also in New Orleans. The difference in HDI scores between these census tracts translates to a more than fifteen-year gap in life expectancy, a more than $35,000 difference in earnings, and a sixty-three-percentage-point gap in bachelor’s degree attainment.

Generally, the highest-scoring areas are the census tracts in New Orleans’ Lakeview and Audubon neighborhoods, along with the southwest corner of Metairie. The lowest-scoring areas are scattered in eastern New Orleans, Algiers, and more rural parts of Jefferson Parish. These geographic disparities roughly mirror racial divisions across the city, reflecting both the legacy of segregation and redlining and the more contemporary impact of gentrification (See: A Tale of Two Neighborhoods: Gentrification After Katrina).

Health

- The average life expectancy in Orleans Parish is 74.4 years; in Jefferson Parish, it is 75.3. In both parishes, as in the rest of the state, women outlive men (by 7.7 years in Orleans Parish and 6.2 years in Jefferson Parish), and white residents outlive Black residents (by 5.7 years in Orleans Parish and 3.5 years in Jefferson Parish).
**Education**

- The high white HDI in Orleans Parish is driven by a sky-high Education Index score (8.54). While 64.5 percent of white city residents have a bachelor’s degree and 29.3 percent have a graduate degree, only 18.2 percent of Black residents have a bachelor’s degree, and 6.7 percent have a graduate degree.

- While not as stark, wide disparities in educational attainment in Jefferson Parish are also present: twice as many white as Black residents have a bachelor’s degree (32.5 percent versus 16.9 percent), and the same holds true for graduate degrees (10.7 percent versus 5.7 percent).

- As with many school districts around the country, New Orleans–area schools struggle with entrenched residential segregation and inequalities in school quality. Many studies suggest that school choice and voucher-style reforms could contribute to, rather than ameliorate, racial segregation in schools and neighborhoods (see: School Choice in New Orleans and Beyond—A Mixed Record).

**Earnings**

- Overall, Jefferson Parish residents take home $1,000 more annually than the average resident of Louisiana, while Orleans residents take home about $500 less.

- Despite having higher Education Index scores in both parishes, women earn much less than men, with men taking home $12,000 more than women in Jefferson Parish and $8,000 more in Orleans Parish.

- Wealth affects families along every axis of human development by supporting the ability to invest in education, enjoy healthier living environments, and prepare for unexpected emergencies or opportunities. In New Orleans, stark differences in home values between Black and white families indicate a large and widening wealth divide (see: What About Wealth?).

- While residents of New Orleans and northern Jefferson Parish have more options for public transportation than their rural counterparts, key gaps in infrastructure restrict access to employment. One report found that the average city resident can access 89 percent of the region’s jobs within a thirty-minute drive, but only 12 percent within a thirty-minute public transit commute (see: Improve Public Transportation).
TABLE 12  Human Development Index by Race and Ethnicity and by Gender in New Orleans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH</th>
<th>LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (25+)</th>
<th>AT LEAST BACHELOR’S DEGREE (25+)</th>
<th>GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (25+)</th>
<th>SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (ages 3 to 24)</th>
<th>EDUCATION INDEX (out of 10)</th>
<th>MEDIAN EARNINGS ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOUISIANA</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>76.4</td>
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<td>74.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>79.4</td>
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<td>72.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
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<td>78.1</td>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>12.7</td>
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<td>18.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>78.4</td>
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<td>80.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>8.54</td>
<td>43,000</td>
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<td>4.38</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>4.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
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<td>73.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
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<td>Black</td>
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<td>75.7</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>4.84</td>
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<td>32.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>31,633</td>
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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.
Note: Jefferson Parish is made up of three PUMAs that are entirely within the parish and one that is grouped with two other parishes. The estimates by race and gender use only the three PUMAs that are within the parish. They represent 76 percent of the population of the parish.
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 New Orleans

Jefferson Parish has a lower rate of youth disconnection than most parishes in Louisiana, with 13.2 percent of parish youth ages 16 to 24 out of work and out of school; Orleans Parish has a slightly higher rate of 15.5 percent. Both are lower than the statewide youth disconnection rate, 16.4 percent. There is considerable variation by race and region within these parishes, however. Central New Orleans, for example, has the fourth-highest rate of youth disconnection of all PUMAs in the state, 22.9 percent, while the southern portion of the city has the lowest rate in the state at just 7.2 percent. But even in this urban opportunity-rich neighborhood of New Orleans, racial disparities are manifest—12.9 percent of southern New Orleans’ Black young people are disconnected. However, the Jefferson communities on the west bank of the Mississippi and the more rural southern reaches of Jefferson Parish (the PUMA for which is combined with St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes) both have high rates of youth disconnection (16.7 and 18.2 percent, respectively), and white residents of these PUMAs are slightly more likely to be disconnected than their Black peers.

**TABLE 1  Human Development and Youth Disconnection in New Orleans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUMA</th>
<th>HDI</th>
<th>LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years)</th>
<th>LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (% of adults 25+)</th>
<th>AT LEAST BACHELOR’S DEGREE (% of adults 25+)</th>
<th>GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (% of adults 25+)</th>
<th>SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (% ages 3 to 24)</th>
<th>EDUCATION INDEX (out of 10)</th>
<th>MEDIAN EARNINGS ($)</th>
<th>YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)</th>
<th>BLACK YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)</th>
<th>WHITE YOUTH DISCONNECTION (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans City (South)</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>35,685</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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<td>Jefferson Parish (Central)</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>36,362</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<td>Jefferson Parish (North)</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>34,836</td>
<td>11.6</td>
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<td>New Orleans City (Northeast)</td>
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<td>77.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>30,095</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Bernard, Jefferson (South) &amp; Plaquemines Parishes</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>31,258</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Orleans City (Central)</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>27,006</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jefferson Parish (West Bank)</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>28,448</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.


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.
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.
ADDITIONAL CITY CLOSE-UPS

Shreveport

Monroe

Baton Rouge

www.measureofamerica.org/louisiana2020