

## About the Community Opportunity Map Indicators

### Overview

The Community Opportunity Map (COM), developed by Community Attributes Inc. and customized for Casey Family Programs, is an interactive mapping platform that displays publicly available community data in user-specified geographic areas across the United States. Most data for the COM was compiled using the American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year estimates; data for one indicator (*work hours per week to rent a two-bedroom home at minimum wage*) comes from the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). See below for further information about the data sources, indicators, and geographies.

The COM is free to the public and designed to increase access to available information about communities, specifically drawing attention to ***ecological indicators commonly associated with child maltreatment***. The information displayed in the COM does not represent an exhaustive list of community characteristics associated with child maltreatment, nor does the COM encompass all of the information necessary to make critical decisions that impact communities. Instead, the COM is designed as a tool that can be utilized to inform decision-making, strategic intervention, calls to action, and stakeholder engagement to promote community health and well-being.

Questions regarding the COM, the indicators selected, the ACS, and how the COM can be used should be directed to [GeographicAnalysis@casey.org](mailto:GeographicAnalysis@casey.org). Questions regarding how the statistics are generated or technical issues using the COM should be directed to [help@communityattributes.com](mailto:help@communityattributes.com).

### About the Data Sources

The ACS is a nationally representative survey, conducted on an annual basis by the U.S. Census Bureau, measuring economic, social, housing, and demographic characteristics. The Census Bureau contacts more than 3.5 million households in the United States every year. Data collected helps communities, policymakers, and other stakeholders make data-informed decisions about resource allocation, service delivery, emergency planning, city planning, and other vital functions. For more information, see the ACS Information Guide.<sup>1</sup>

Additional housing data is provided by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), which releases annual reports on the accessibility and availability of affordable housing. The COM uses data from their *Out of Reach* reports, which provide data on the gap between low income renters' wages and how many hours they would need to work to afford the cost of rental housing in communities across the US. For more information, see <https://reports.nlihc.org/orr>.

### The Indicators

The indicators displayed in the COM were carefully selected based on their association with *rates of child maltreatment* and their *availability to the public*. At least one or more of the indicators displayed in the COM are found in other national frameworks and indexes that assess community health and well-being.<sup>2</sup>

Broadly speaking, community characteristics have an impact on child abuse and neglect rates in communities, separate from the influence of individual family characteristics. Ecological factors can pose risks to families (or act as benefits and protective factors) through such mechanisms

as social support, economic distress, residential stability, lack of formal and informal community resources, and community norms related to parenting. The following section provides information on how each indicator in the COM is calculated—all data comes from the ACS, unless otherwise indicated.

### Child and Family Demographics

*Children under 5 in poverty* was operationalized as the percentage of the population of children under the age of 5 years in a geographic area for whom poverty status is determined whose household income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level.<sup>3</sup>

*Children without health insurance* was operationalized as the percentage of the population of children under the age of 19 years in a geographic area with no health insurance coverage.<sup>4</sup>

*Child to adult ratio* was operationalized as the ratio of the number of children under the age of 14 years to the number of adults aged 21 to 64 years in a geographic area.<sup>5</sup>

*Single mother families* was operationalized as the percentage of family households who indicated a female householder, with no husband present, and living with their own children under 18 years of age.<sup>6</sup>

*People 65 and over* was operationalized as the percentage of the population over the age of 65 in a geographic area.<sup>7</sup>

### Education Indicators

*4-year HS graduation rate* was operationalized as 100 minus the percentage of adults aged 16-19 years in a geographic area who are not in school or who do not have a high school diploma, general educational development (GED) diploma or alternative credential.<sup>8</sup>

*Age 25+ without a GED* was operationalized as the percentage of adults aged 25 and over in a geographic area who do not have a regular high school diploma, general educational development (GED) diploma or alternative credential.<sup>9</sup>

*Age 25+ with HS diploma/GED* was operationalized as the percentage of adults aged 25 and over in a geographic area who have a regular high school diploma, general educational development (GED) diploma or alternative credential (or higher educational attainment).<sup>9</sup>

*Age 25+ with a bachelor's degree or more* was operationalized as the percentage of adults aged 25 and over in a geographic area who have a bachelor's degree or more.<sup>9</sup>

### Economic Indicators

*Unemployment rate* was operationalized as the percentage of the population aged 16 years and over in a geographic area who are in the civilian labor force and unemployed.<sup>10</sup>

*Poverty rate* was operationalized as the percentage of the population in a geographic area for whom poverty status is determined whose household income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level.<sup>11</sup>

*Households under 200% poverty* was operationalized as the percentage of the population in a geographic area for whom poverty status is determined whose household income in the past 12 months is 200% of the poverty line or less.<sup>12</sup>

*Median household income* was operationalized as the household income value in a geographic area where half of household incomes in the past 12 months are higher and half of household incomes in the past 12 months are lower (i.e., the middle value).<sup>13</sup>

## Housing Characteristics

*Work hours/week to rent a two-bedroom home at minimum wage* was operationalized as the average number of hours residents in a county/metro area would need to work at minimum wage to afford a two-bedroom rental home at fair market rent.<sup>14</sup> This data comes from the NLHHC and is only available for a county/metro area.

*Housing cost burden* was operationalized as the percentage of owners and renters in a geographic area living in occupied housing units paying 30 percent or more of their household income toward their mortgage or rent, where selected monthly costs as a percentage of household income could be computed.<sup>15</sup>

*Resident turnover* was operationalized as the percentage of the population in a geographic area aged 1 year who moved in the last year.<sup>16</sup>

*Vacant housing* was operationalized as the percentage of housing units in a geographic area that are unoccupied.<sup>17</sup>

The COM also includes demographic characteristics of neighborhoods that provide important context about communities, including:

- *Population*<sup>18</sup>
- *Foreign born*<sup>19</sup>
- *Racial/ethnic heterogeneity*<sup>20</sup>

These demographic characteristics can be applied in the COM as data layers to provide context about communities. In addition to these demographic characteristics, additional data layers to help contextualize COM indicators include:

- *Education Level*<sup>9</sup>
- *Limited English proficiency*<sup>21</sup>
- *People of color*<sup>20</sup>
- *Population density*<sup>18</sup>
- *Poverty rate*<sup>11</sup>
- *Unemployment rate*<sup>10</sup>

## The Level of Geography

Estimates provided in the COM are extrapolated from the Census *tract* or *block group* level. Census tracts, which generally comprise between 1,200 and 8,000 people depending on the population density, are “relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county or equivalent entity. The primary purpose of census tracts is to provide a stable set of geographic units for the presentation of statistical data.”<sup>22</sup> Block groups are statistical divisions of census tracts.<sup>23</sup> Because some estimates in the COM are aggregated from these smaller geographic units, slight differences may exist between COM estimates and larger census-designated places such as ZIP code tabulation areas or cities.

Further, the COM allows the user to obtain information and on ZIP codes as defined by the U.S. Postal Service and by congressional district. These ZIP codes do not directly map on to the ZIP code tabulation areas used by the Census Bureau; instead, ZIP code estimates for the Community Opportunity Map are derived using information on the block groups and census tracts whose geographic center lies within the user-specified ZIP code. In other words, these ZIP code estimates are approximations and will include some information on individuals residing within or outside of a given postal ZIP code.

It is also important to note that small area estimates, by their nature, carry larger margins of error. Some of this margin of error is reduced by using *5-year* estimates from the ACS, but users should still use caution when interpreting community data from the COM. The COM provides a snapshot of information, but it is best used as a supplement to additional information available about communities, especially rich, qualitative information that cannot be captured by high-level area estimates.

## For More Information

For more information regarding the COM, the indicators selected, and how the COM can be used, contact [GeographicAnalysis@casey.org](mailto:GeographicAnalysis@casey.org).

## Reference Notes

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2017, October). American Community Survey information guide. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration. Available at [https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/about/ACS\\_Information\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/acs/about/ACS_Information_Guide.pdf).
- <sup>2</sup> For example, see: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015). *Healthy Communities Index (HCI): Core indicators*. Available at <https://www.huduser.gov/healthycommunities/sites/default/files/public/HCI%20Indicators%202015.pdf>; University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2017). *County health rankings & roadmaps*. Available at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2018). *Social determinants of health*. Available at <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>; Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018). *KIDS COUNT data center*. Available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry. (2013). *The social vulnerability index*. Available at <https://svi.cdc.gov/>; Institute for Child, Youth and Family Policy, The Heller School, Brandeis University. (2018). *Diversitydatakids.org: Data for a diverse and equitable future*. Available at <http://www.diversitydatakids.org/>.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B17001: Poverty status in the past 12 months by sex by age*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B27001: Health insurance coverage status by sex and age*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B01001: Sex by age*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B11003: Family type by presence and age of own children under 18 years*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B01001: Sex by age*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B14001: School enrollment by level of school for the population 3 years and over*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B15003: Educational attainment for the population 25 years and over*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B23025: Employment status for the population 16 years and over*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B17021: Poverty status of individuals in the past 12 months by living arrangement*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B17024: Age by ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>13</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B19013: Median household income in the past 12 months (in 2017 inflation-adjusted dollars)*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>14</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach: State Data. Available at <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor>.
- <sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B25093: Age of householder by selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months and Table B25070: Gross rent as a percentage of household income in the past 12 months*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B07003: Geographical mobility in the past year by sex for current residence in the United States*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B25002: Occupancy status*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B01001: Sex by age*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B05002: Place of birth by nativity and citizenship status*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>20</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B03002: Hispanic or Latino origin by race*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>21</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, (Annual) American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Table B16002: Detailed household language by household limited English speaking status*. Available at <https://data.census.gov>.
- <sup>22</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *Geographic terms and concepts – Census tract*. Available from [https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc\\_ct.html](https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_ct.html).
- <sup>23</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *Geographic terms and concepts – Block group*. Available from [https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc\\_bg.html](https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_bg.html).