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Mapping Socioeconomic Indicators by Race and County in Arkansas

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Mapping Socioeconomic Indicators by Race and County in Arkansas



Urban League of
the State of Arkansas, Inc.



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

Sam M. Walton College of Business
Center for Business & Economic Research

Introduction

The Urban League of the State of Arkansas seeks to lead efforts in advancing and obtaining equal opportunities for all citizens with a particular focus in the areas of health, education, jobs, and housing. In keeping with this mission, the Urban League of Arkansas partnered with the Center for Business and Economic Research in the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas to produce a report that provides data to identify key areas of need in the African American and Latinx communities in Arkansas and develop programs and policies to address them.

In this report, the key areas of concern include issues around the school to prison pipeline, poverty rates, economic wellbeing, and educational attainment. The fourteen indicators included within these areas: incarceration rates, prison admissions, out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, corporal punishment rates, expulsions rates, poverty rates, childhood poverty rates, labor force participation rates, unemployment rates, employment-to-population ratio rates, owner-occupied housing rates, high school/GED attainment rates, and higher education attainment rates.

Data for each of these indicators was collected from 2015 to 2018 for the overall population, whites, African Americans, and Latinx from the Arkansas Department of Education, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Arkansas Department of Corrections. Density maps for each indicator and their changes from 2015 to 2018 are presented on a county-level with versions for each population (white, African American, Latinx/Hispanic and overall).



Contents

School to Prison Pipeline

The school to prison pipeline indicators presented in this section are the incarcerated population (p. 6-8), prison admissions (p. 9-11), corporal punishment (p.12-14), expulsions (p. 15-17), in-school suspensions (p. 18-20), out-of-school suspensions (p. 21-23). The indicators provide insights into the corrections system and potential determinants.

Poverty

The indicators presented in this section are the poverty rate (p. 25-27) and the childhood poverty rate (p. 28-30). The indicators provide understanding about the prevalence of poverty among the different populations across the counties in the state.

Economic Indicators

The economic indicators presented in this section are homeownership (p. 32-34), employment to population ratio (p. 35-37), labor force participation rate (p. 38-40), and the unemployment rate (p. 41-43). The indicators provide insights into participation in the labor market and the housing market.

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment indicators presented in this section are the High School Diploma/GED attainment rate (p. 45-47) and Bachelor's Degree attainment rate (p. 48-50). The indicators provide clarity about the educational credentials and human capital among the different populations in Arkansas.

School to Prison Pipeline



27

Counties saw a decline in
Incarcerations per 100 Adults
from 2015 to 2018



19

Counties which utilized Expulsions
(0.025+ per 100 students)
from 2015 to 2018

OVERVIEW

The school to prison pipeline section presents data and maps for the incarcerated population; prison admissions; corporal punishment; expulsions; in-school suspensions; and out-of-school suspensions. Research suggests that children who experience greater rates of school disciplinary actions have a higher likelihood of entering the corrections system.¹ A study of Arkansas K-12 students, from 2008-09 to 2014-15, suggests African American students face exclusionary discipline at much higher rates than white students even controlling for infractions and student behavioral history. The disparity is driven across schools as African American and white students had similar rates at the same schools.² The first two indicators review the current state of the corrections system while the latter four examine common school disciplinary actions.



1 Raufu, A, (2017) "School-to-Prison Pipeline: Impact of School Discipline on African American Students," Journal of Education & Social Policy, Vol. 7, No.1, pp. 47-53.

2 Anderson, K. P., & Ritter, G. W. (2017). Disparate use of exclusionary discipline: Evidence on inequities in school discipline from a U.S. state. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 25(49).

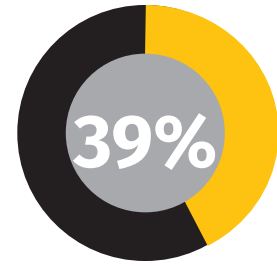
Incarceration Rate



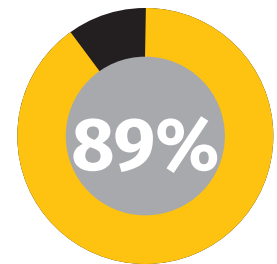
Incarceration has a drastic cost on an individual and society. Society utilizes resources to remove individuals from society and attempt to rehabilitate them. The experience of incarceration has many negative physical, emotional and mental effects on individuals. In addition, the history of incarceration creates barriers as an individual attempts to reintegrate into society. These negative effects of incarceration disparately impact the various racial communities in Arkansas.

The number of incarcerated adults, reported at the county level, was retrieved from the Arkansas Department of Correction. The data is matched to corresponding adult population data from the Census Bureau to produce the incarceration rate in this section. The incarceration data captures the overall number of currently incarcerated adults which is reported by their county of conviction. The incarceration rate is the proportion of currently incarcerated adults out of 100 adults, by their county of conviction.

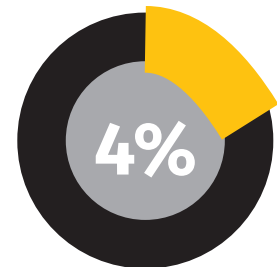
The incarceration rates were vastly different among the population groups in Arkansas. The African American population had higher rates of incarceration than other groups. The Hispanic population had the lowest rates of incarceration of all groups with only a few high-rate counties. The white population had incarceration rates which were lower than the African American population but slightly higher than the Hispanic population.



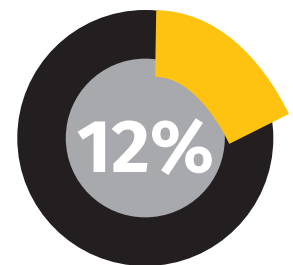
**of counties in 2018 had
1+ incarcerations
per 100 adults**



**of counties in 2018 had
1+ incarcerations
per 100 African
American adults**



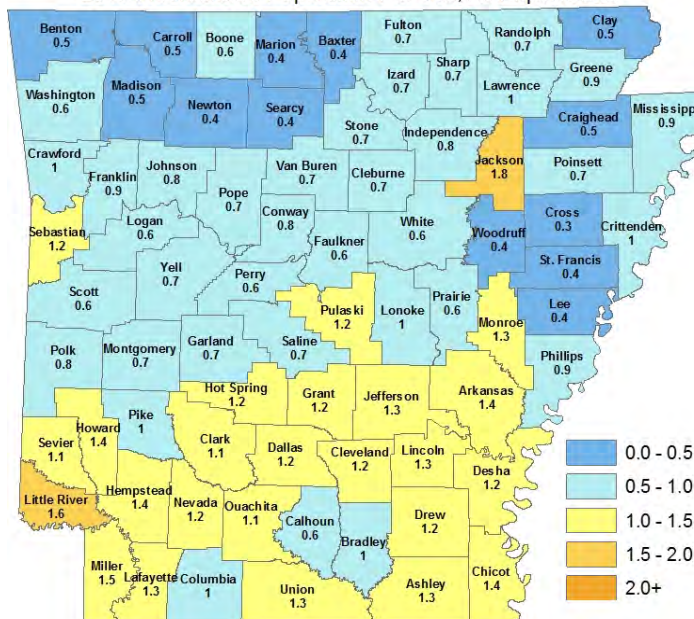
**of counties in 2018 had
1+ incarcerations
per 100 Hispanic adults**



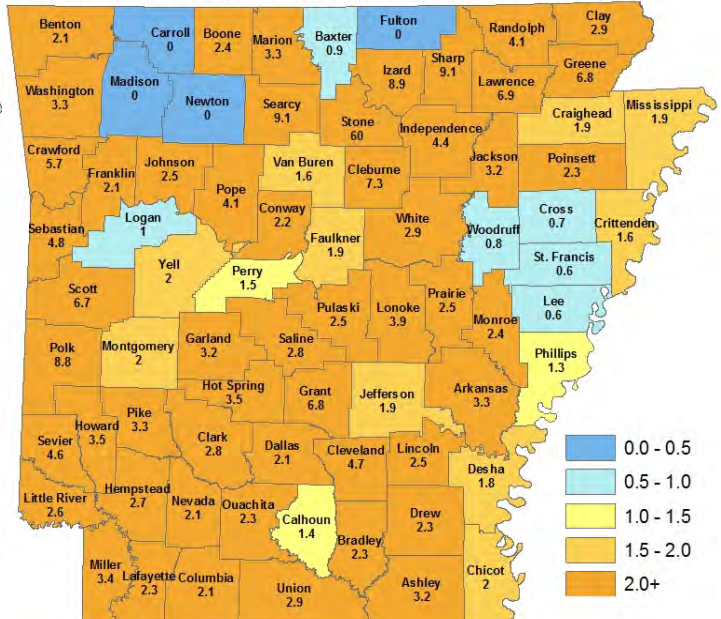
**of counties in 2018 had
1+ incarcerations
per 100 white adults**

Incarceration Rate in 2015

2015 Incarcerated Population Per 100, All Populations

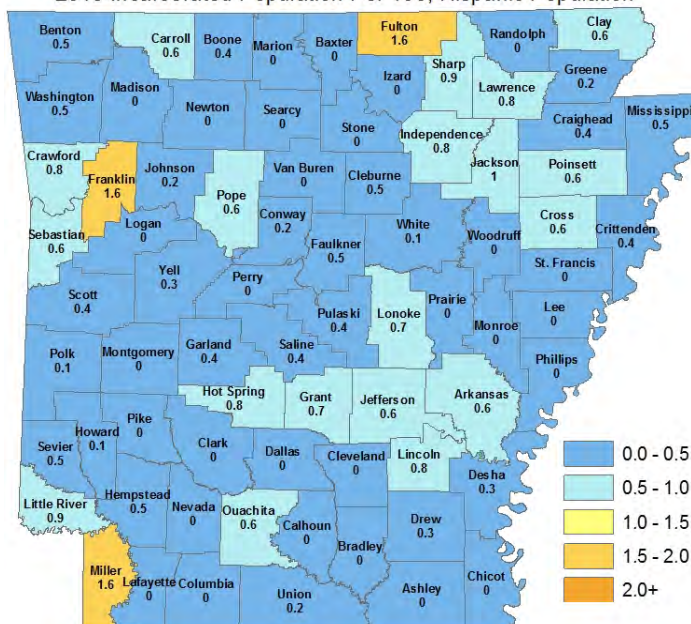


2015 Incarcerated Population Per 100, African American Population

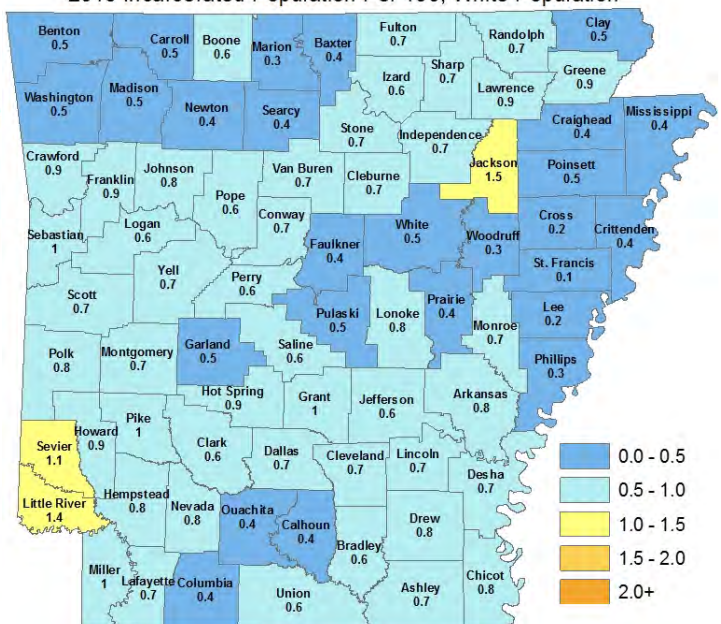


The incarceration rate varied among the different populations within Arkansas in 2015. The African American population had significantly higher incarceration rates than other groups. The Hispanic population displayed lower incarceration rates than other groups but had a few counties of high incarceration rates, such as Fulton, Franklin, and Miller. The high rate counties were not the counties who had the largest populations or concentrations of Hispanics in Arkansas. The rates of incarceration among the white population were relatively higher than the Hispanic population and lower than the African American population.

2015 Incarcerated Population Per 100, Hispanic Population

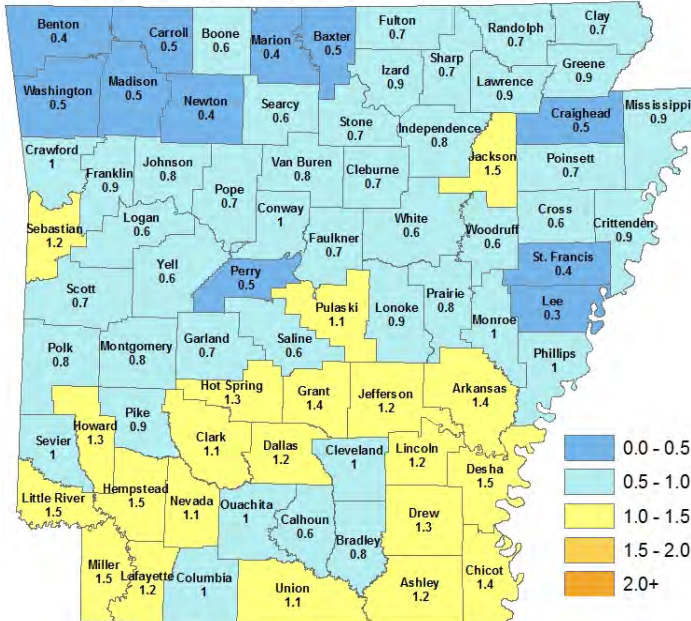


2015 Incarcerated Population Per 100, White Population

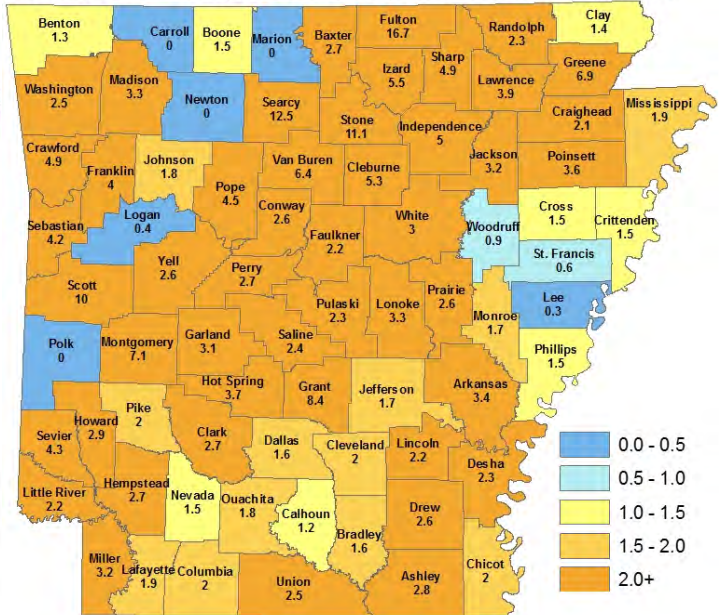


Incarceration Rate in 2018

2018 Incarcerated Population Per 100, All Populations

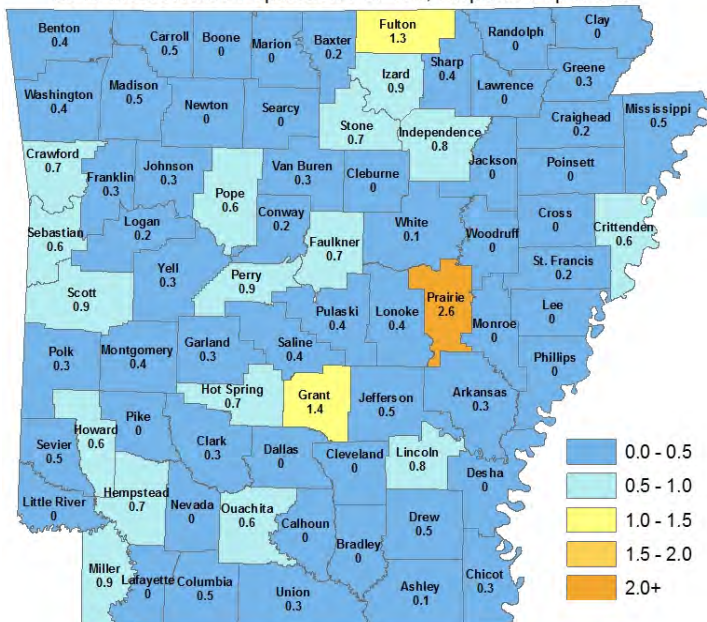


2018 Incarcerated Population Per 100, African American Population

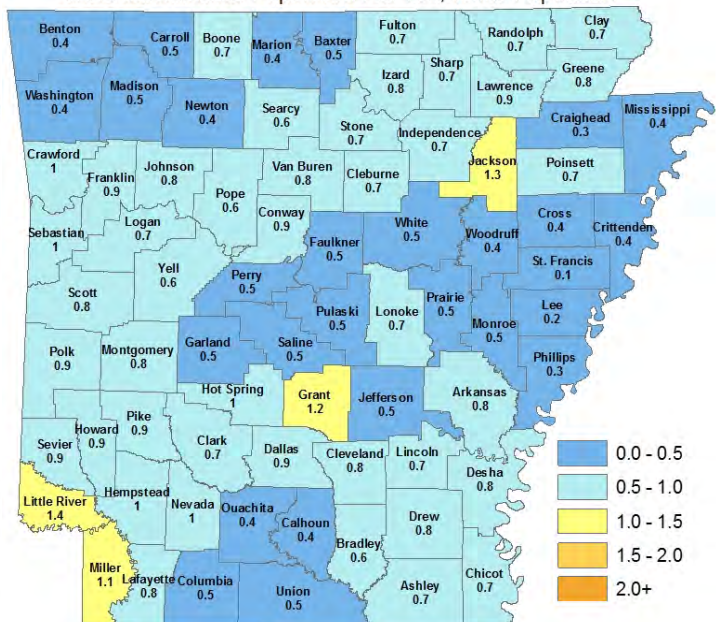


The incarceration rates in 2018 for each population group were mostly unchanged from 2015. The African American population had greater incarceration rates than other groups. The Hispanic population saw lower incarceration rates than other groups but had a few counties, such as Prairie, Grant, and Fulton, with high incarceration rates. The counties with the largest populations or concentrations of Hispanics in Arkansas did not have the highest rates of incarceration. The white population continued to have incarceration rates which were higher than the Hispanic population and lower than the African American population.

2018 Incarcerated Population Per 100, Hispanic Population



2018 Incarcerated Population Per 100, White Population



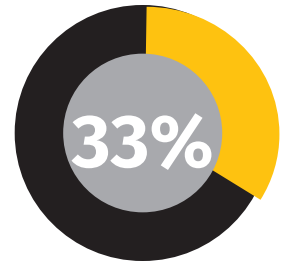
Prison Admissions



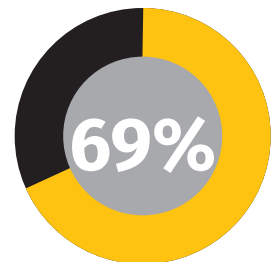
Admission into prison is the end of civilian life and the commencement of a serious rehabilitation period. An adult enters the corrections system from their county of conviction and then begins to serve their sentence. Prison admissions reflect the incoming annual flow of incarcerated adults, as opposed to the overall population of incarcerated adults. The disparate nature of prison admissions warrants an analysis of the relevant data in Arkansas.

The prison admissions data, reported on a county level, was retrieved from the Arkansas Department of Correction. The data is matched to corresponding adult population data from the Census Bureau to produce the maps in this section. The prison admissions data reports newly incarcerated adults by their county of conviction. The prison admissions rate is the proportion of adults admitted to the corrections system out of 100 adults.

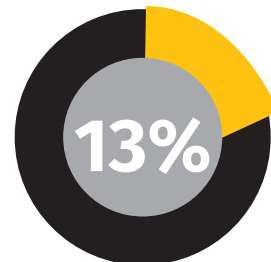
Prison admissions were immensely different among the various population in Arkansas. The African American population had the highest rates of admissions among all groups. The Hispanic population displayed the lowest rates of admissions. The white population had rates which were higher than the Hispanic population but lower than the African American population.



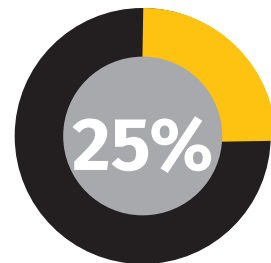
of counties in 2018 had 0.5+ admissions per 100 adults



of counties in 2018 had 0.5+ admissions per 100 African American adults



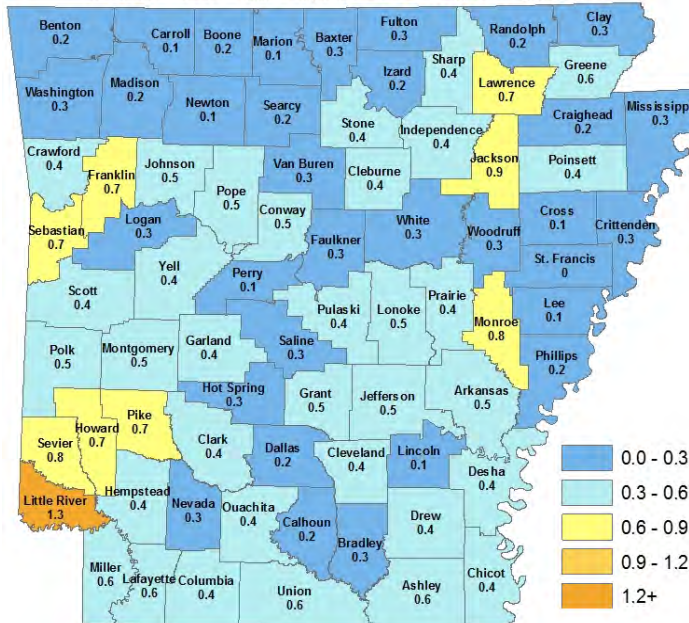
of counties in 2018 had 0.5+ admissions per 100 Hispanic adults



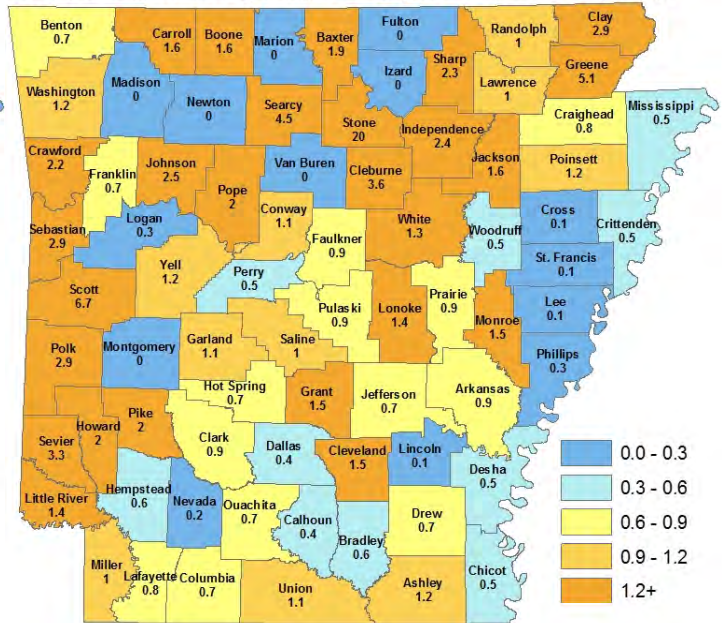
of counties in 2018 had 0.5+ admissions per 100 white adults

Prison Admissions in 2015

2015 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, All Populations

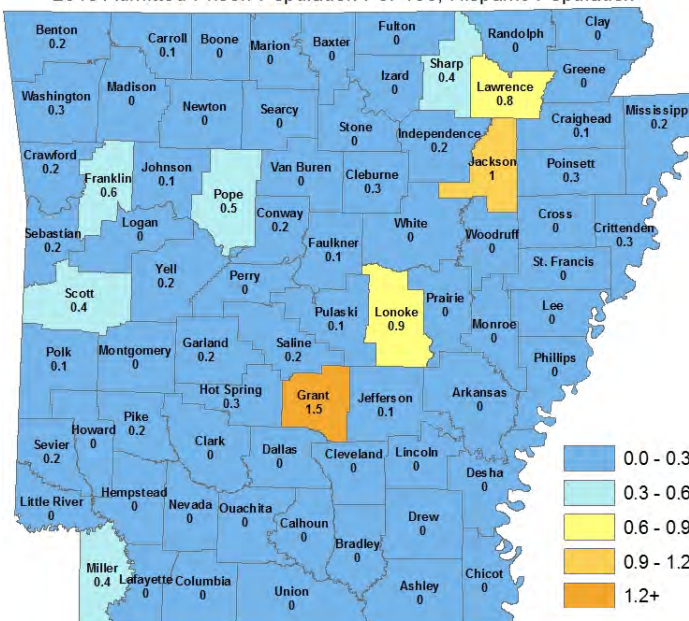


2015 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, African American Population

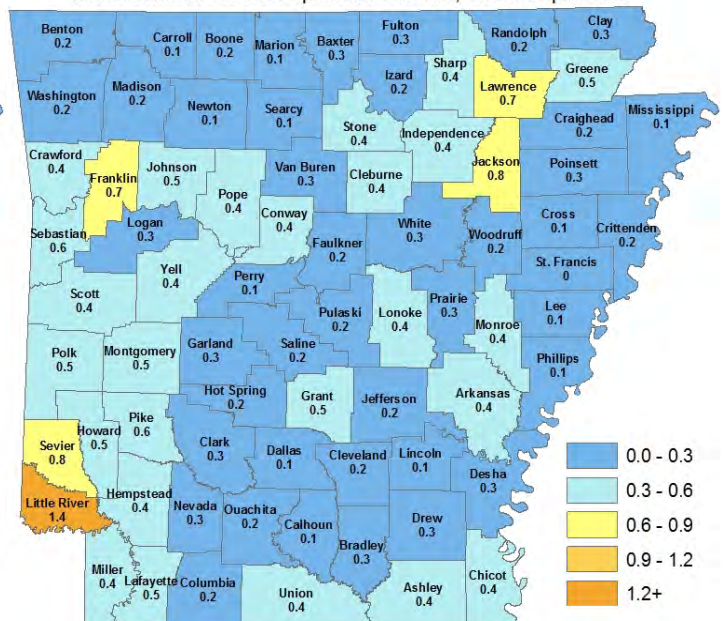


The prison admissions data shows the disparities among the different populations across Arkansas in 2015. The African American population had greater prison admission rates than other groups. The Hispanic population had lower admissions rates than other groups, but a few counties, such as Grant, Jackson, and Lonoke, had high admission rates. The high rate counties were not among counties with the largest populations or concentrations of Hispanics in Arkansas. The white population's admissions rates were relatively higher than the Hispanic population and lower than the African American population. The white population had clusters of low and moderate rate counties, which appears to be slightly correlated to the relative educational and employment levels of a county.

2015 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, Hispanic Population

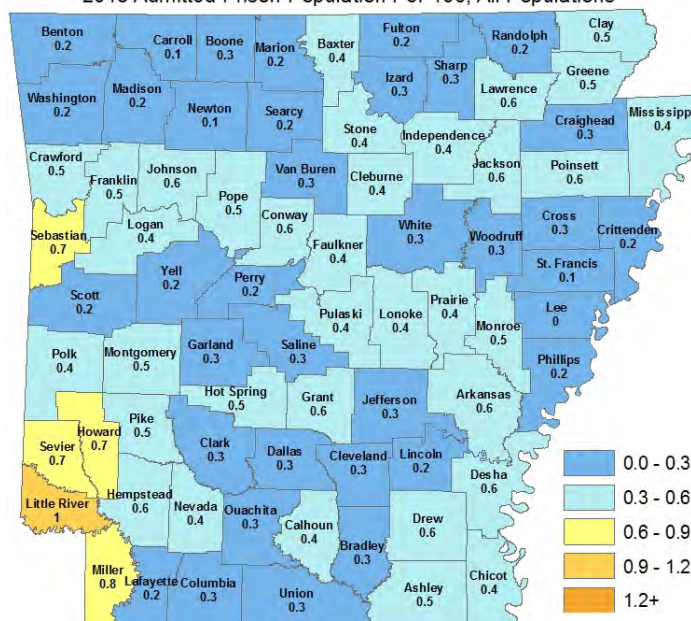


2015 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, White Population

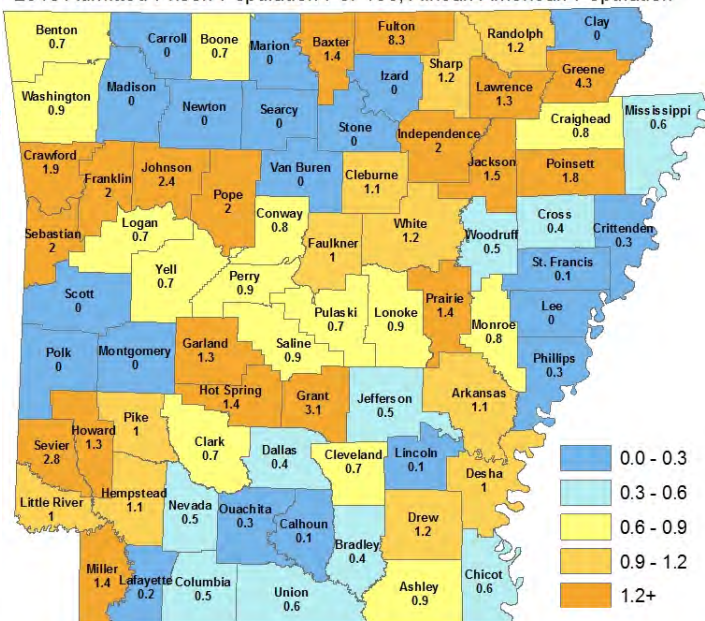


Prison Admissions in 2018

2018 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, All Populations

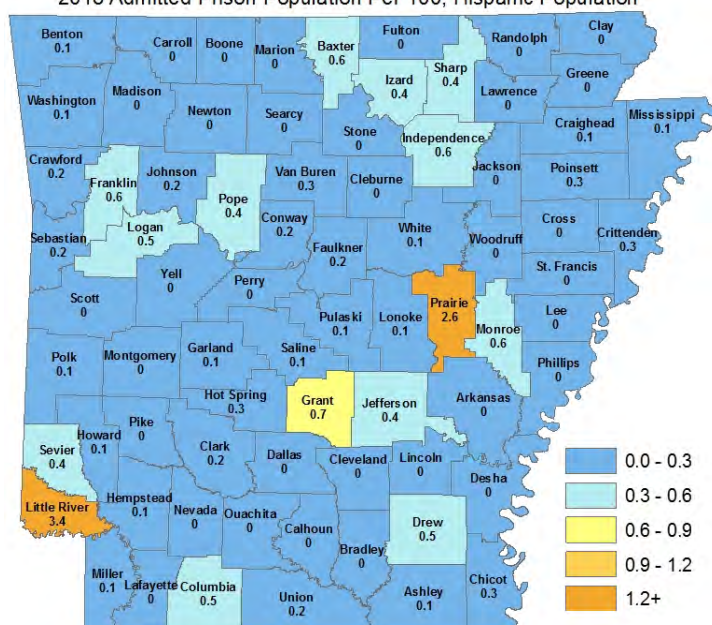


2018 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, African American Population

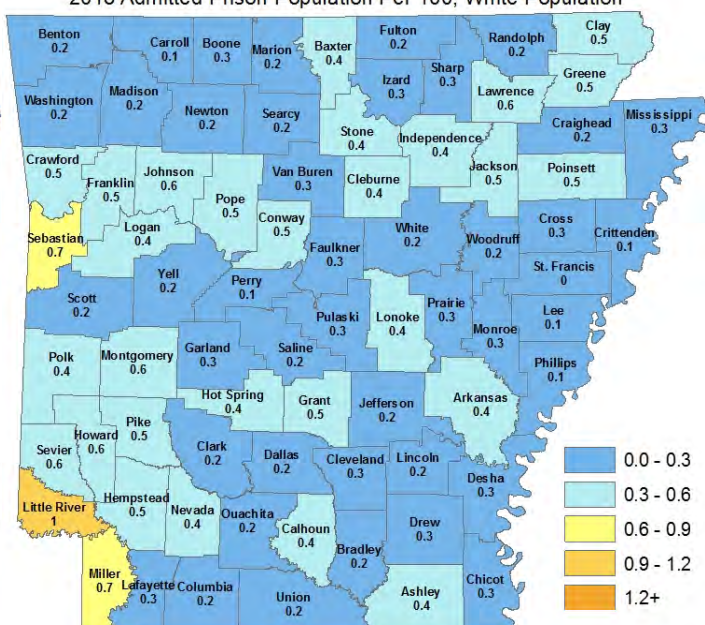


The prison admission rates in 2018 remained constant to the 2015 trends across the population groups. The African American population continued to have higher prison admission rates than other racial and ethnic groups. The Hispanic population saw lower admissions rates than other groups but a few counties, such as Little River, Prairie, and Grant, had high admission rates. The high prison admission rates were not among counties with the largest populations or concentrations of Hispanics in Arkansas. The white population's admission rates remained relatively higher than the Hispanic population and lower than the African American population.

2018 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, Hispanic Population



2018 Admitted Prison Population Per 100, White Population





**Of counties in 2018 had
10+ incidents of
Corporal Punishment
per 100 students**



**Of counties in 2018 had
10+ incidents of
Corporal Punishment
per 100 African
American students**



**Of counties in 2018 had
10+ incidents of
Corporal Punishment
per 100 Hispanic students**



**Of counties in 2018 had
10+ incidents of
Corporal Punishment
per 100 white students**

Corporal Punishment

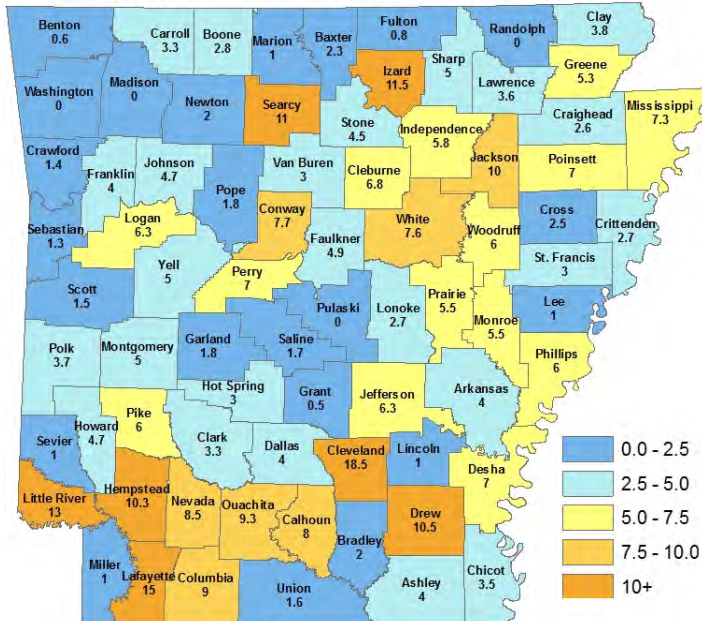
School disciplinary actions are seen as an indicator of future involvement in the criminal justice system. Corporal punishment, the act of hitting or paddling students, is still permitted in Arkansas by some school districts. The act remains a form of school disciplinary action which can have a disparate application among the various racial and ethnic populations among Arkansas' students.

The data contained in this section was retrieved from the Arkansas Department of Education. The original data is reported by school district and is averaged at the county level to produce the section's maps.

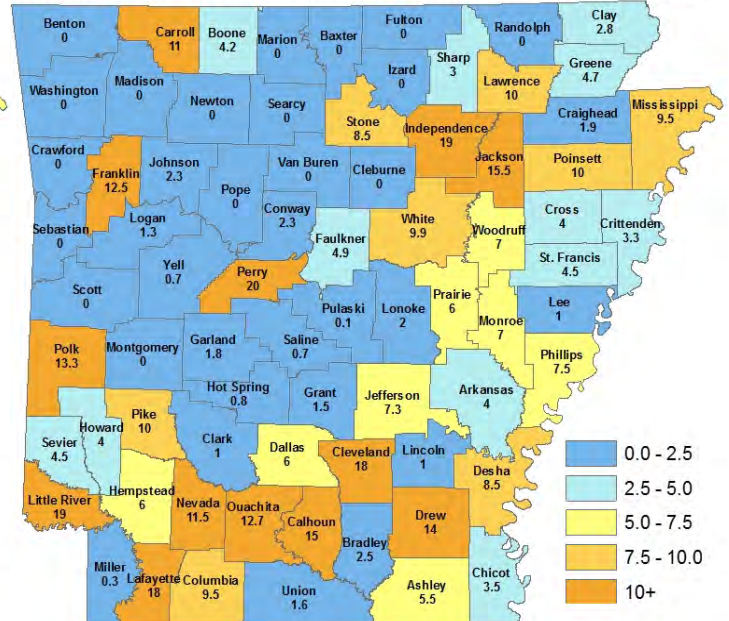
Corporal punishment incidents varied largely by geographic location as only some school districts permit corporal punishment. The metro areas and northern bordering counties of Arkansas typically had lower rates of corporal punishment. The remainder of Arkansas saw relatively common incidents of corporal punishment. The observations were consistent across the Hispanic and white population groups in the state but the African American population had higher rates of corporal punishment.

Corporal Punishment in 2015

2015 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, All Populations

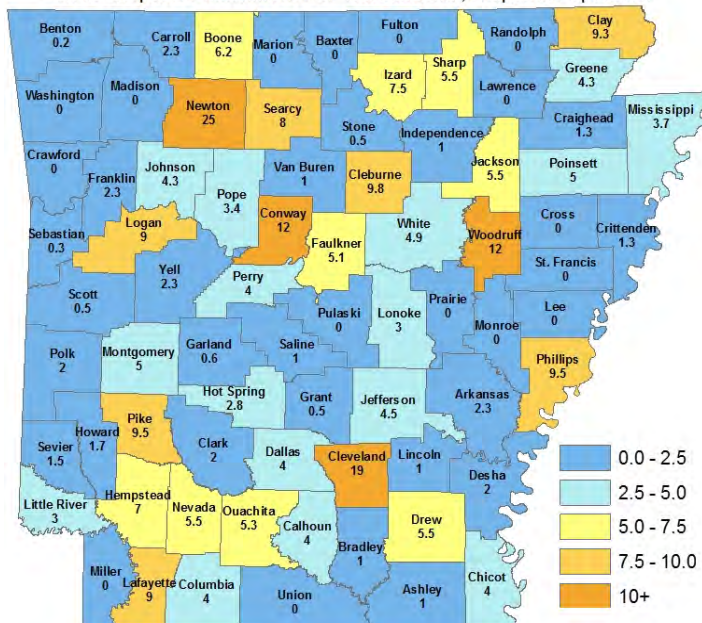


2015 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, African American Population

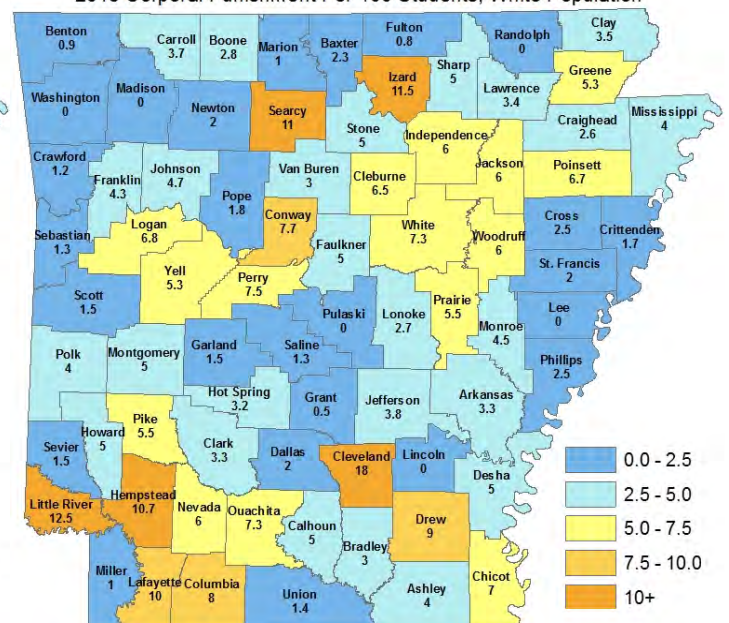


Corporal punishment was more frequent outside of the metro areas in Arkansas in 2015 as larger school districts forbid the practice. The African American student population had higher rates of corporal punishment than other groups, but had many counties with few or no incidents. The highest rates of corporal punishment were among counties with a relatively high proportion of African Americans. The Hispanic student population saw lower rates of corporal punishment and fewer counties with high rates corporal punishment. The white population had high rates of corporal punishment among southern and eastern counties.

2015 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, Hispanic Population

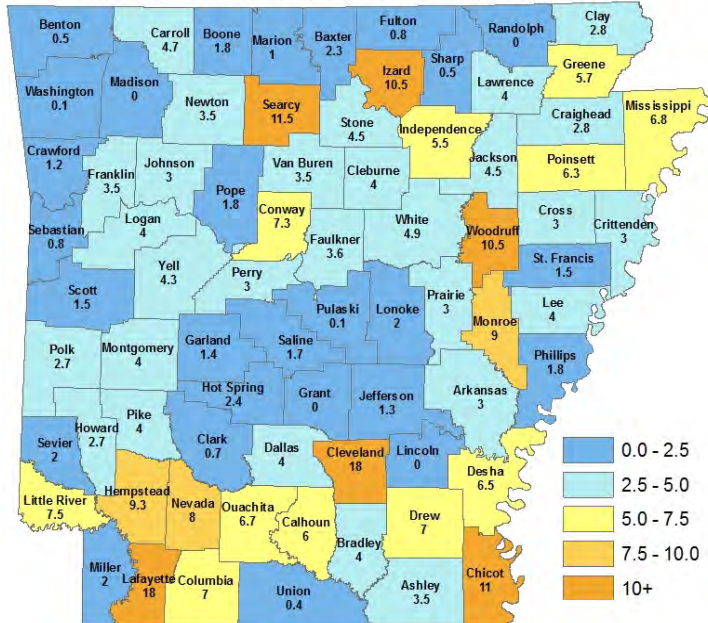


2015 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, White Population

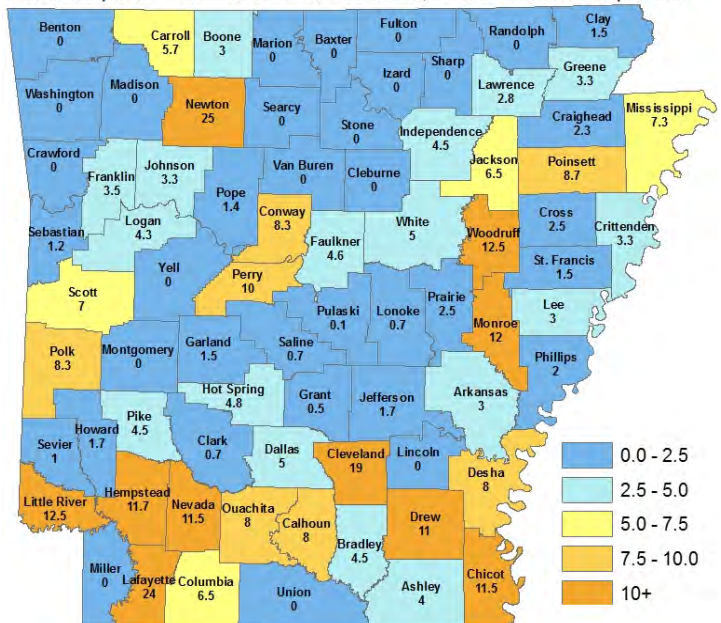


Corporal Punishment in 2018

2018 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, All Populations

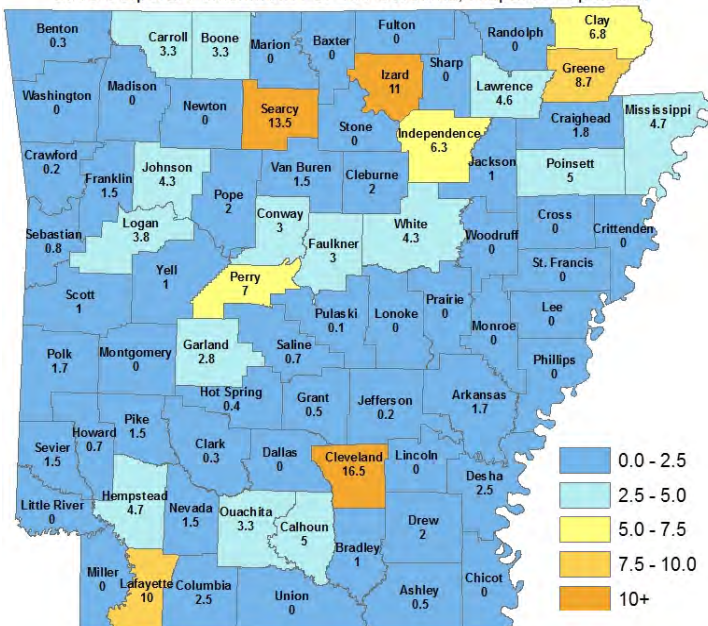


2018 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, African American Population

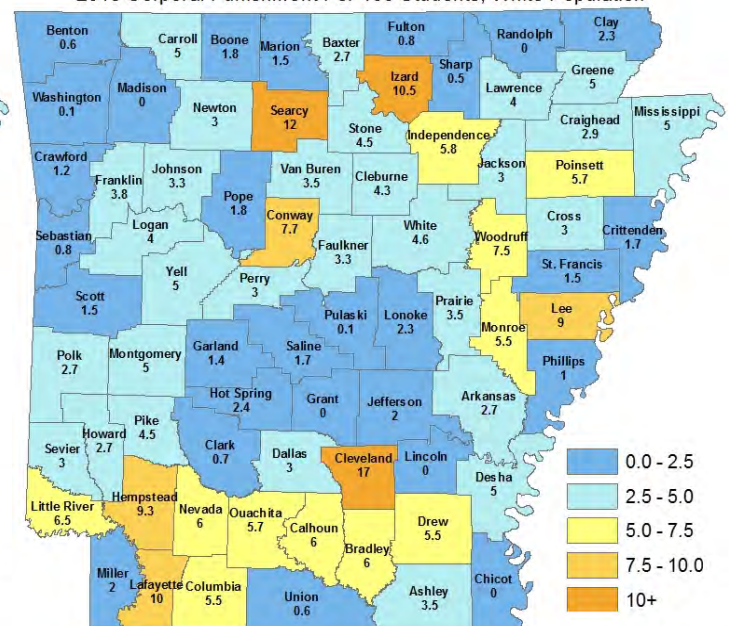


Since 2015, the average rates of corporal punishment among counties declined across the racial and ethnic populations but the occurrence of corporal punishment continued to be greater outside of the metro areas in 2018. The African American students continued to experience higher rates of corporal punishment than other groups. The Hispanic student population once again had lower rates of corporal punishment than other groups. The white student population also experienced corporal punishment at relatively lower rates across most counties.

2018 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, Hispanic Population



2018 Corporal Punishment Per 100 Students, White Population





of counties in 2018 had incidents of Expulsions per 100 students



of counties in 2018 had incidents of Expulsions per 100 African American students



of counties in 2018 had incidents of Expulsions per 100 Hispanic students



of counties in 2018 had incidents of Expulsions per 100 white students

Expulsions

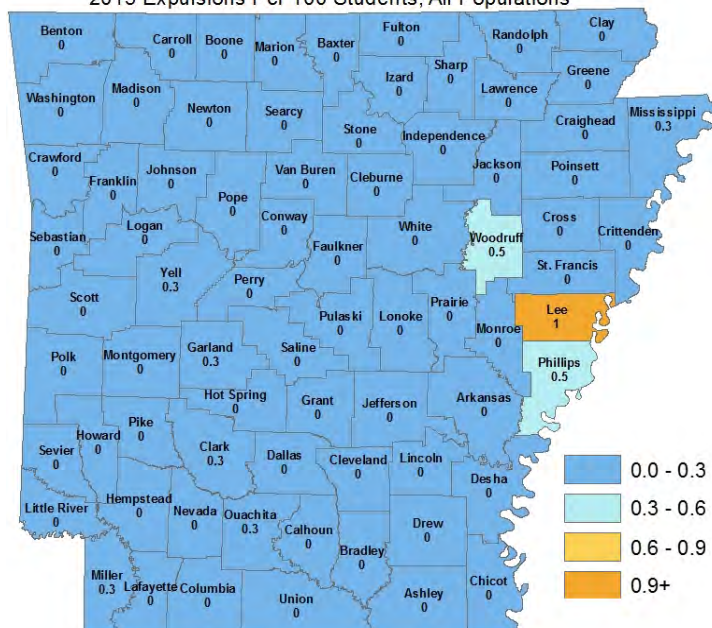
Expulsion is the act of a student being dismissed from school. The use of school disciplinary actions are seen as an indicator of future involvement in the criminal justice system. Expulsion is the most substantial school disciplinary action which can be implemented and this warrants an examination of its occurrence among Arkansas' students.

The data contained in this section was retrieved from the Arkansas Department of Education. The original data is reported by school district and is averaged at the county level to produce the section's maps.

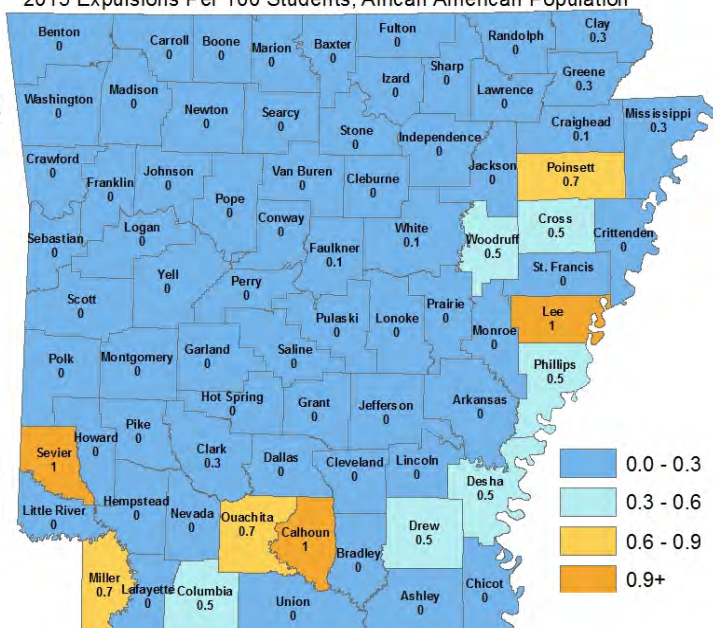
Expulsions incidents were a rare occurrence across the different populations. Given the short-term and long-term implications of the action, it suggests schools utilize it sparingly. The data suggests no specific geographic trend for expulsions. Nonetheless, the African American student population experienced higher expulsion rates than other groups in several counties in Arkansas.

Expulsions in 2015

2015 Expulsions Per 100 Students, All Populations

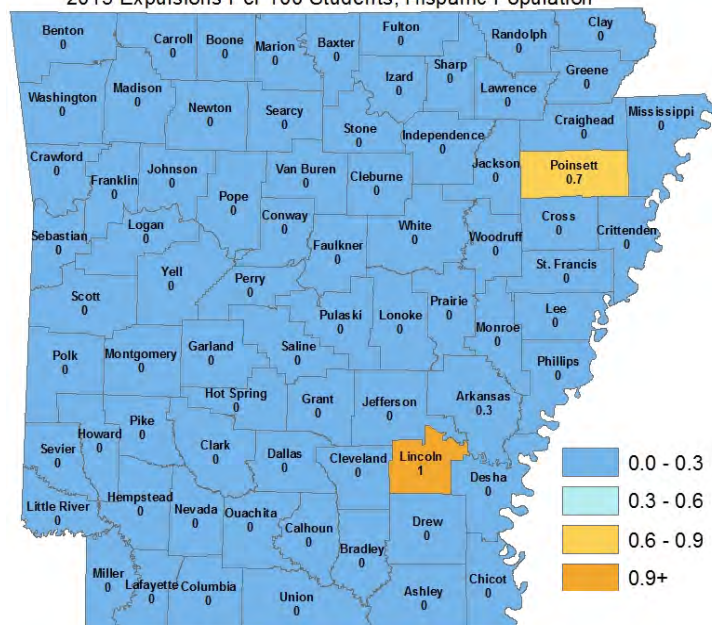


2015 Expulsions Per 100 Students, African American Population

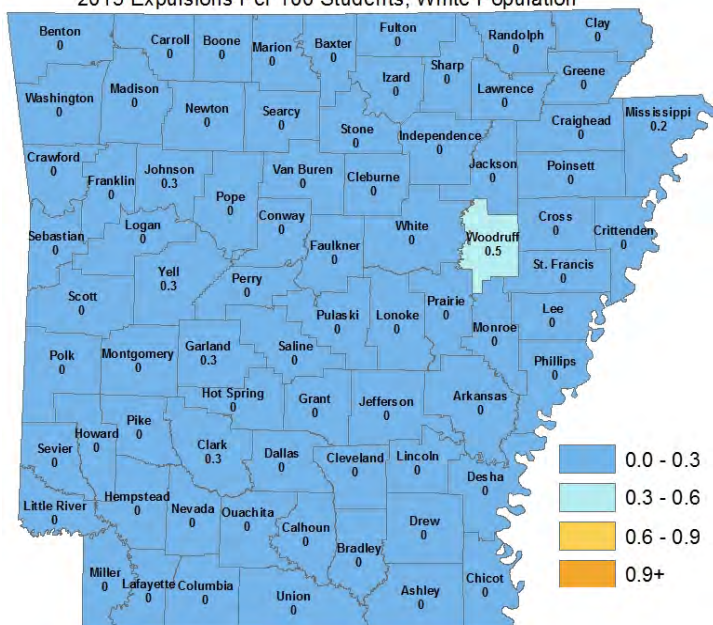


Incidents of expulsions, as shown in these maps with data from 2015, seldomly occurred across Arkansas. The African American student population experienced higher rates of expulsion in more counties than the general population. The counties with higher expulsion rates among the African American student population were located in the state's eastern border and southern regions. The Hispanic student population only had two counties with high rates of school expulsion while the expulsion rates for the white student population was low across the state.

2015 Expulsions Per 100 Students, Hispanic Population

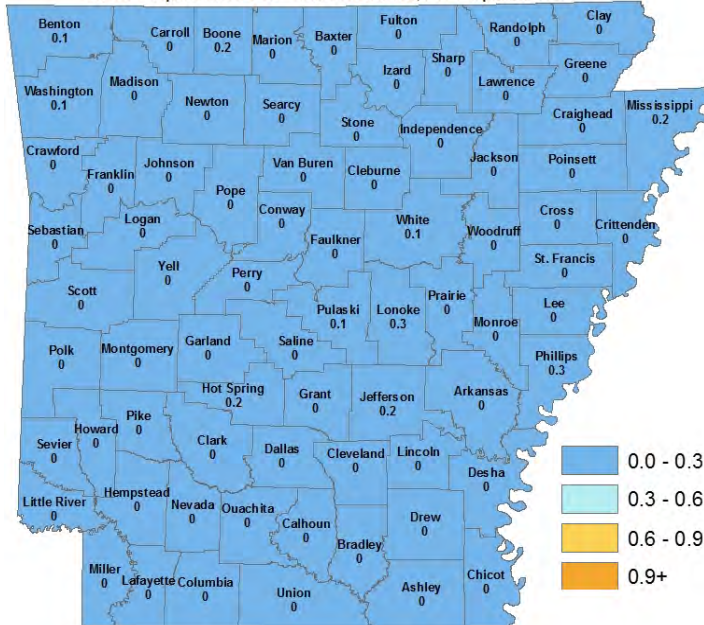


2015 Expulsions Per 100 Students, White Population

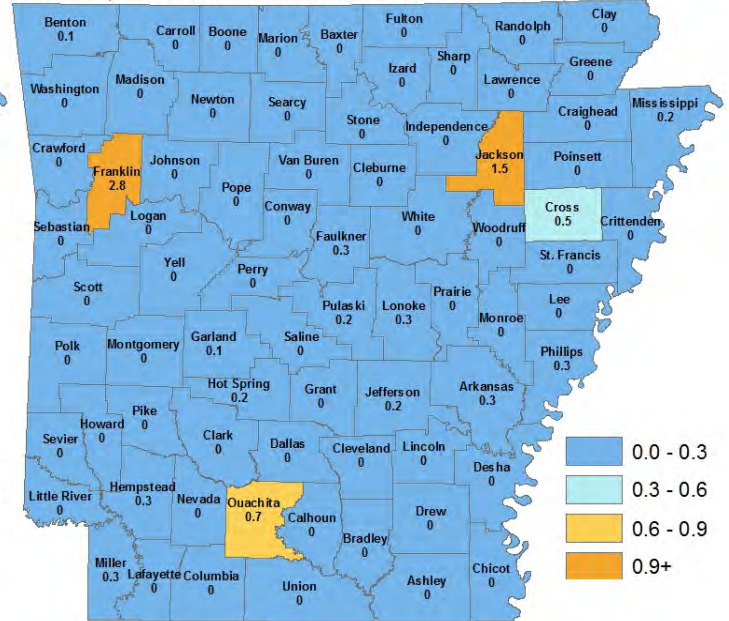


Expulsions in 2018

2018 Expulsions Per 100 Students, All Populations

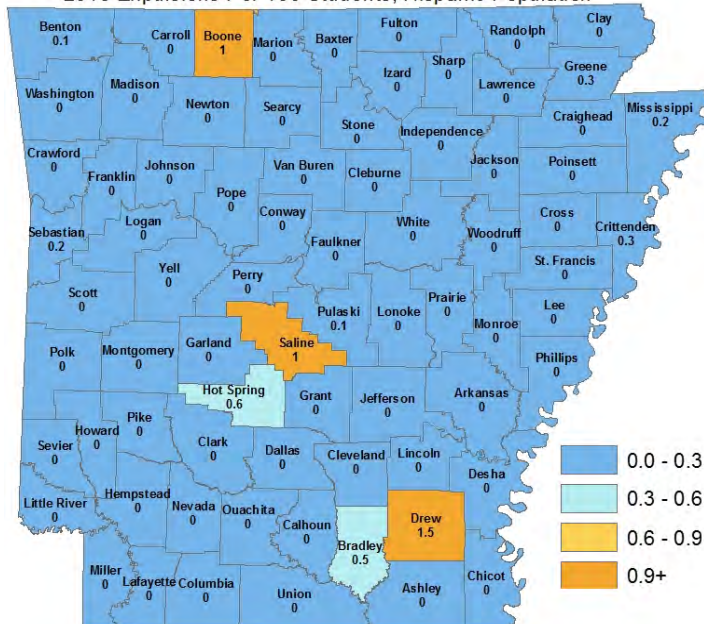


2018 Expulsions Per 100 Students, African American Population

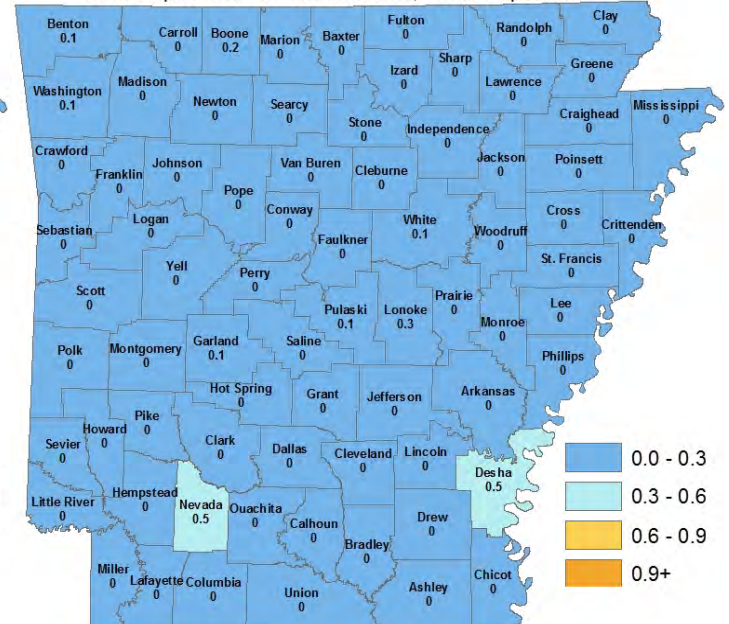


Expulsions were relatively rarer in occurrence across Arkansas in 2018 when compared to 2015. Since 2015, the number of counties with higher rates of expulsion declined for the overall student population and the African American student populations. The Hispanic student population saw an increase in the number of counties with higher expulsions rate; however, outside of Saline county, these counties did not have a large Hispanic population. The white student population did not experienced high rates of expulsion in any county.

2018 Expulsions Per 100 Students, Hispanic Population



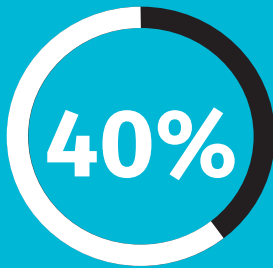
2018 Expulsions Per 100 Students, White Population



In-School Suspensions



9%
of counties in 2018 had 20+ incidents of In-School Suspensions per 100 students



40%
of counties in 2018 had 20+ incidents of In-School Suspensions per 100 African American students



1%
of counties in 2018 had 20+ incidents of In-School Suspensions per 100 Hispanic students



3%
of counties in 2018 had 20+ incidents of In-School Suspensions per 100 white students

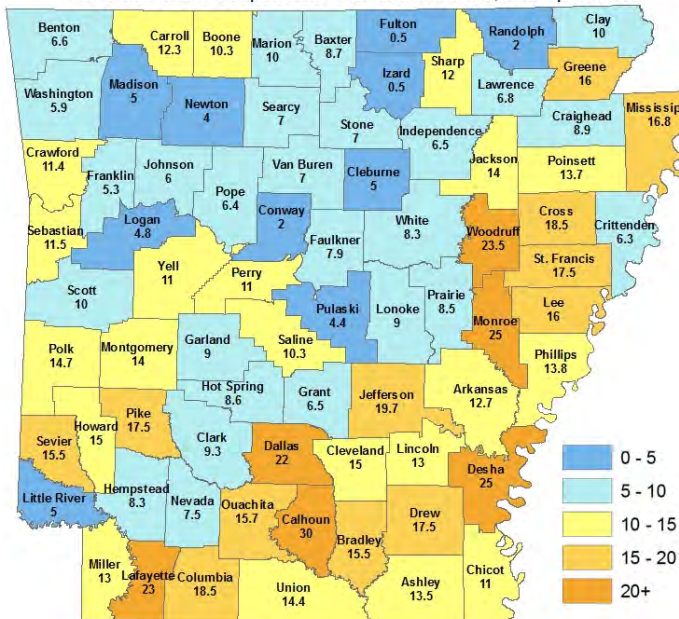
In-school suspensions involve the removal of a student from a classroom and their placement in a room designated for such a purpose. In-school suspension is an isolating disciplinary action and justifies an examination of its occurrence among Arkansas' students.

The data contained in this section was retrieved from the Arkansas Department of Education. The original data is reported by school district and is averaged at the county level to produce the section's maps.

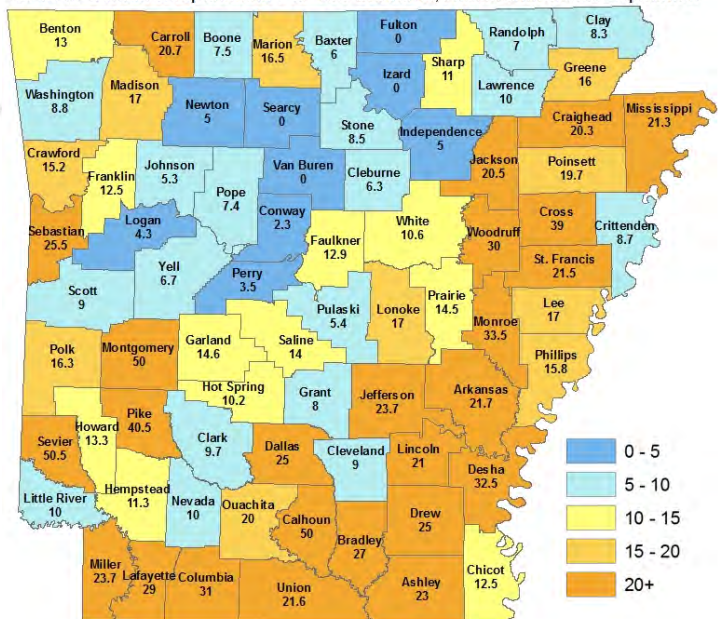
In-school suspensions were a frequent disciplinary occurrence among the different populations in the Arkansas school districts. The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas had relatively lower incident rates compared to the rest of the state. The African American population saw higher rates of in-school suspensions than other groups. The rates of in-school suspensions remained consistent over time across each population.

In-School Suspensions in 2015

2015 In-School Suspensions Per 100 Students, All Populations

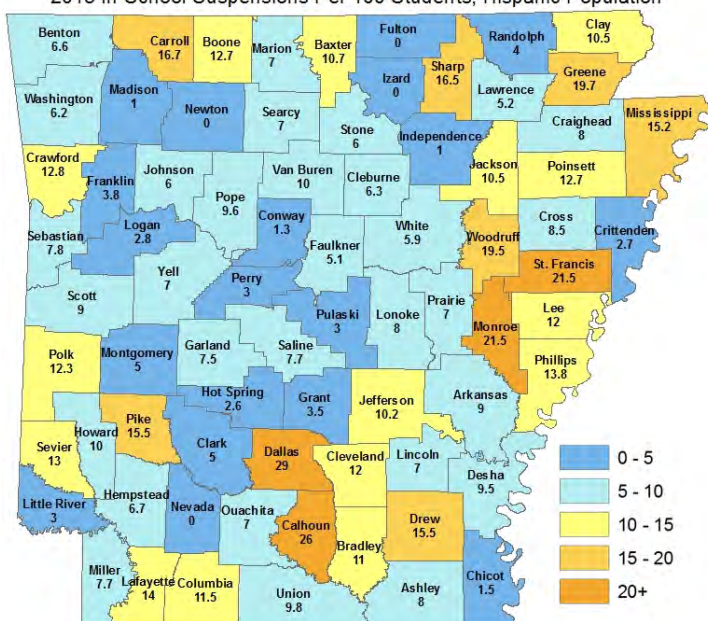


2015 In-School Suspensions Per 100 Students, African American Population

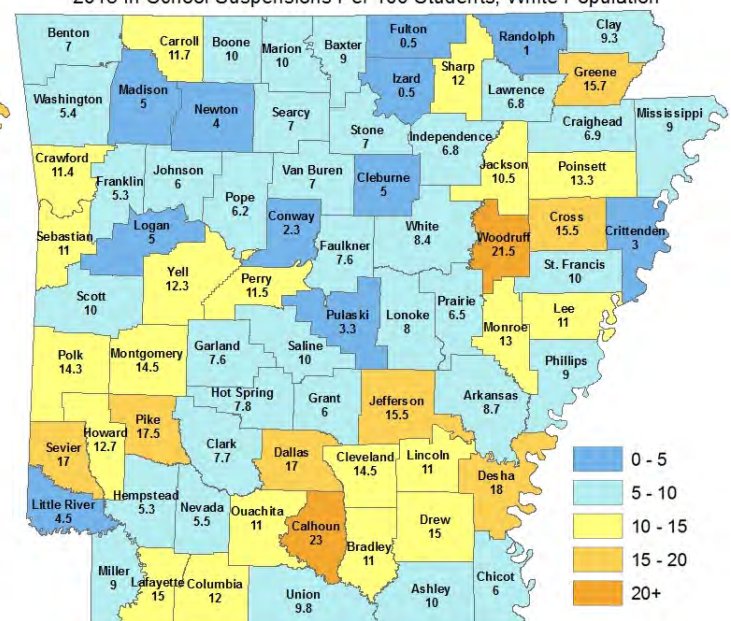


In 2015, in-school suspensions were a frequent disciplinary action in the state's eastern and southern counties. The Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas metro areas displayed relatively lower rates than other regions. The African American student population had the highest rates of in-school suspensions in the state compared to other groups. The Hispanic student population saw relatively lower rates of in-school suspensions but nonetheless, had a few counties such as Dallas, Calhoun, and Monroe, with higher rates of incidents. The white population's in-school suspensions rates were slightly higher than the Hispanic student population but significantly lower than the African American student population.

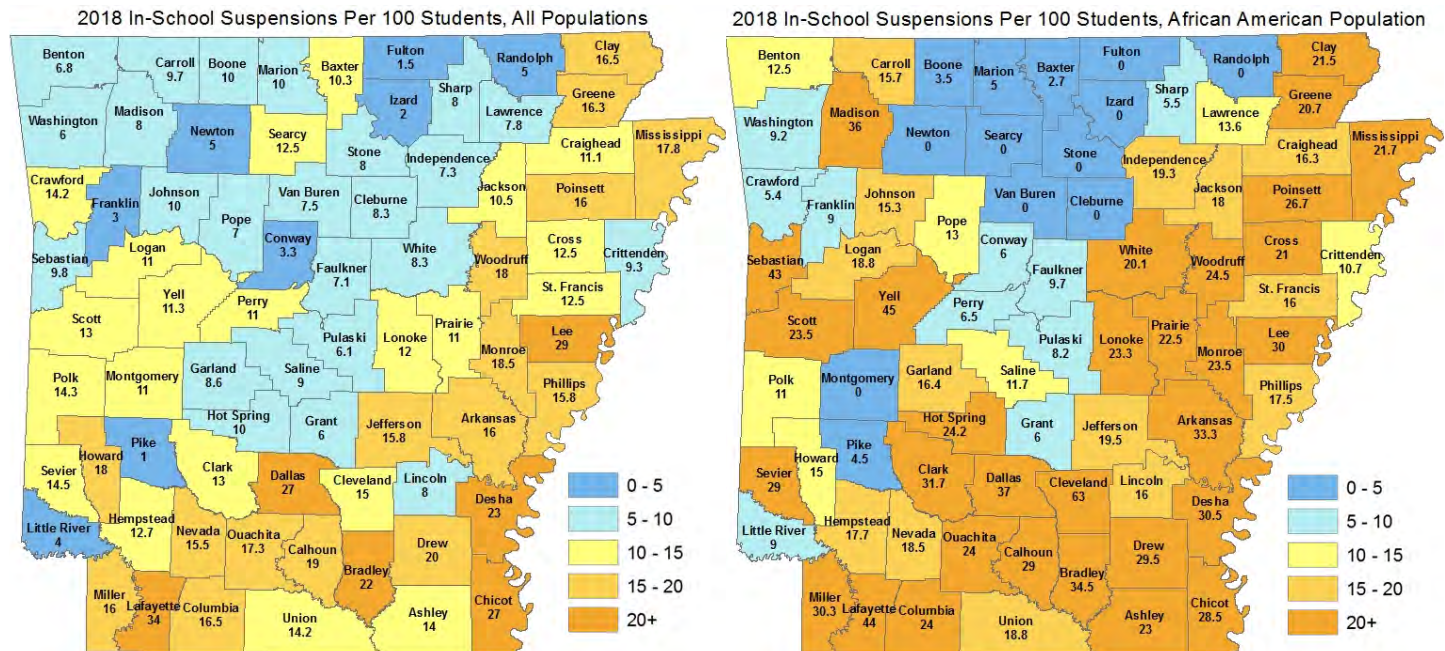
2015 In-School Suspensions Per 100 Students, Hispanic Population



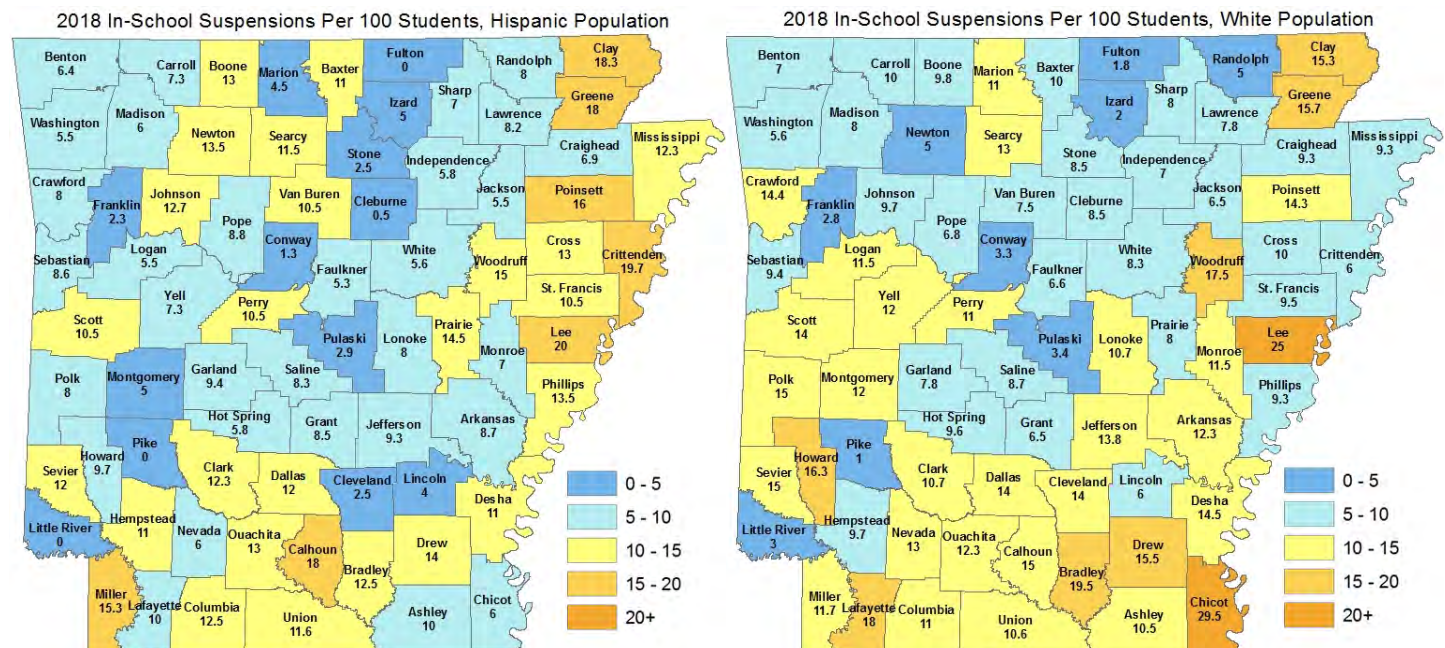
2015 In-School Suspensions Per 100 Students, White Population



In-School Suspensions in 2018

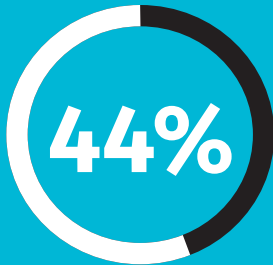


The use of in-school suspensions continued to regularly occur across Arkansas in 2018 and the trends changed very little since 2015. The African American student population's rates of in-school suspensions remained the highest in the state. The Hispanic student population continued to have relatively lower rates of in-school suspensions with the exception of a few counties with high rates of incidents, such as Lee, Crittenden, and Clay. The white student population's in-school suspensions rates were slightly higher than the Hispanic student population but were significantly lower than the African American student population.





of counties in 2018 had
12+ incidents of
Out-of-School Suspensions
per 100 students



of counties in 2018 had
12+ incidents of
Out-of-School Suspensions
per 100 African
African students



of counties in 2018 had
12+ incidents of
Out-of-School Suspensions
per 100 Hispanic students



of counties in 2018 had
12+ incidents of
Out-of-School Suspensions
per 100 white students

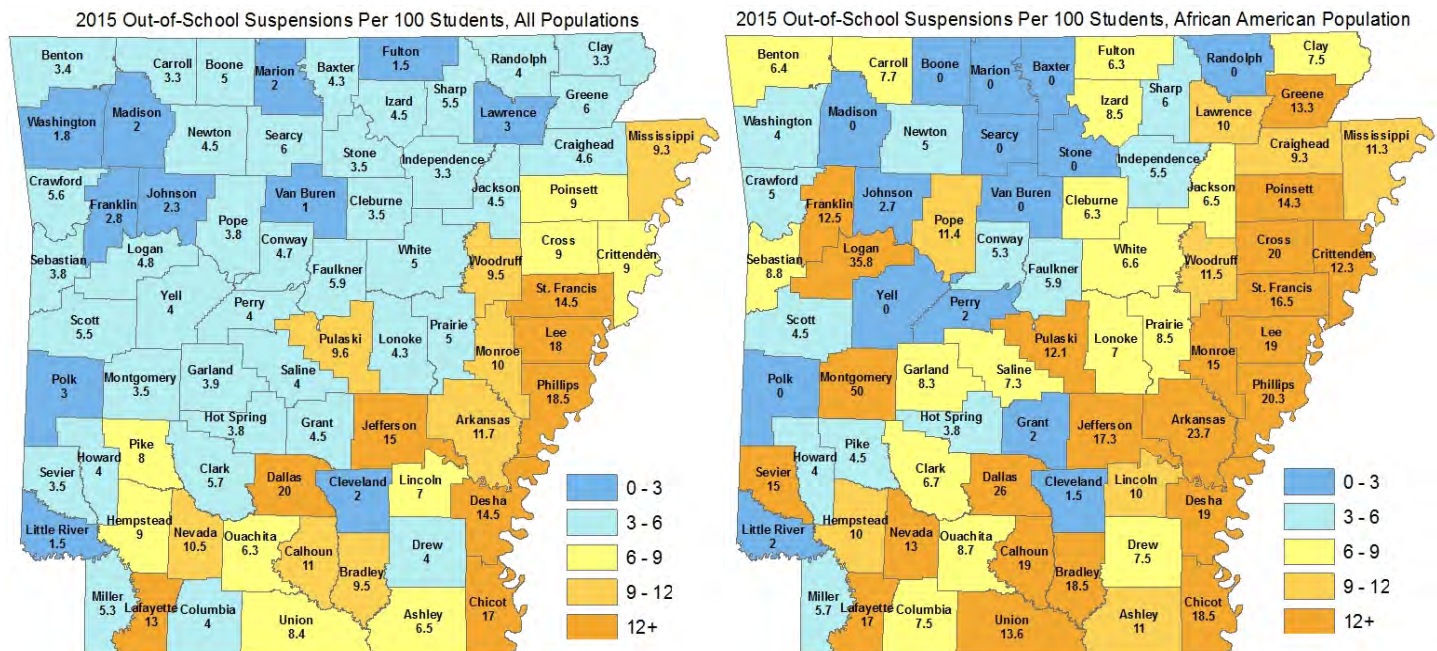
Out-of-School Suspensions

Out-of-school suspension is the act of a student being sent home for a determined number of days before returning to school. Out-of-school suspension is a severe disciplinary action and merits an examination of its occurrence among Arkansas' students.

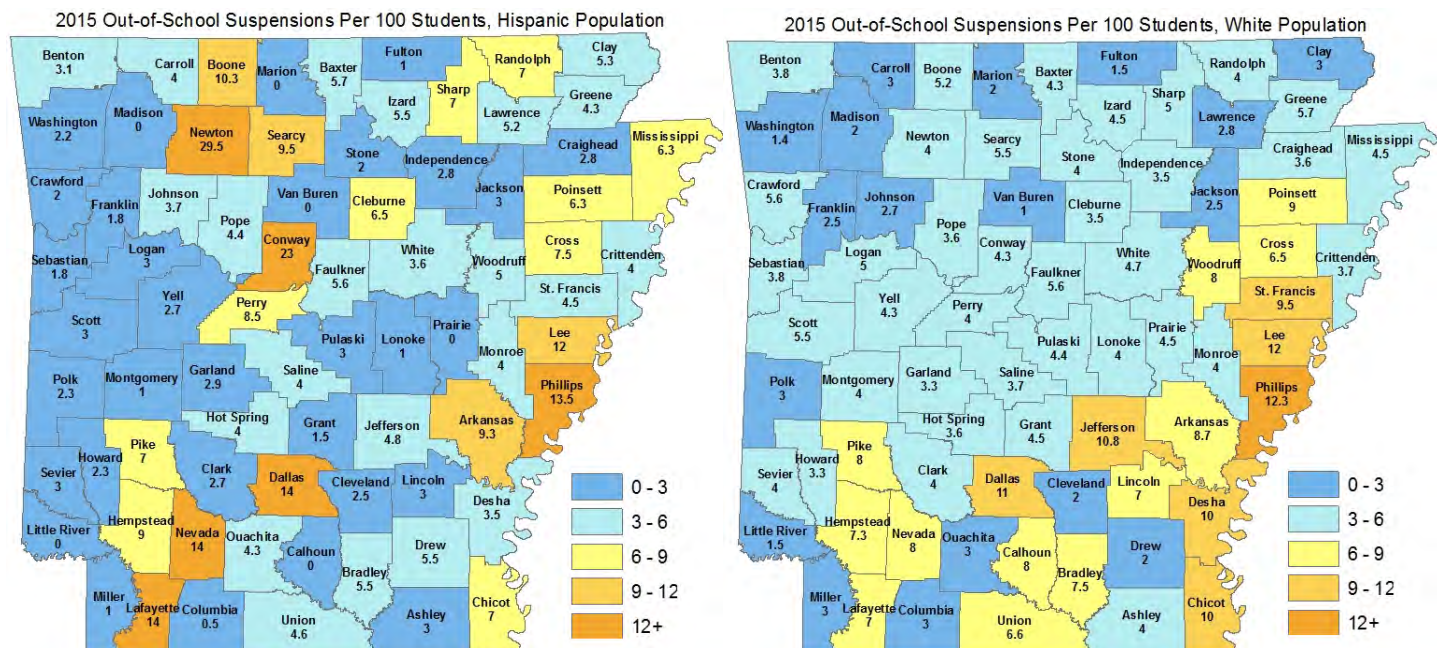
The data contained in this section was retrieved from the Arkansas Department of Education. The original data is reported by school district and is averaged at the county level to produce the section's maps.

Out-of-school suspensions were a frequent discipline action utilized among the different populations by Arkansas school districts. The eastern and southern regions of state had higher rates of out-of-school suspensions during the period. The African American population also saw higher rates of out- of-school suspensions than other groups. The rates of out-of-school suspensions remained consistent over time across each population.

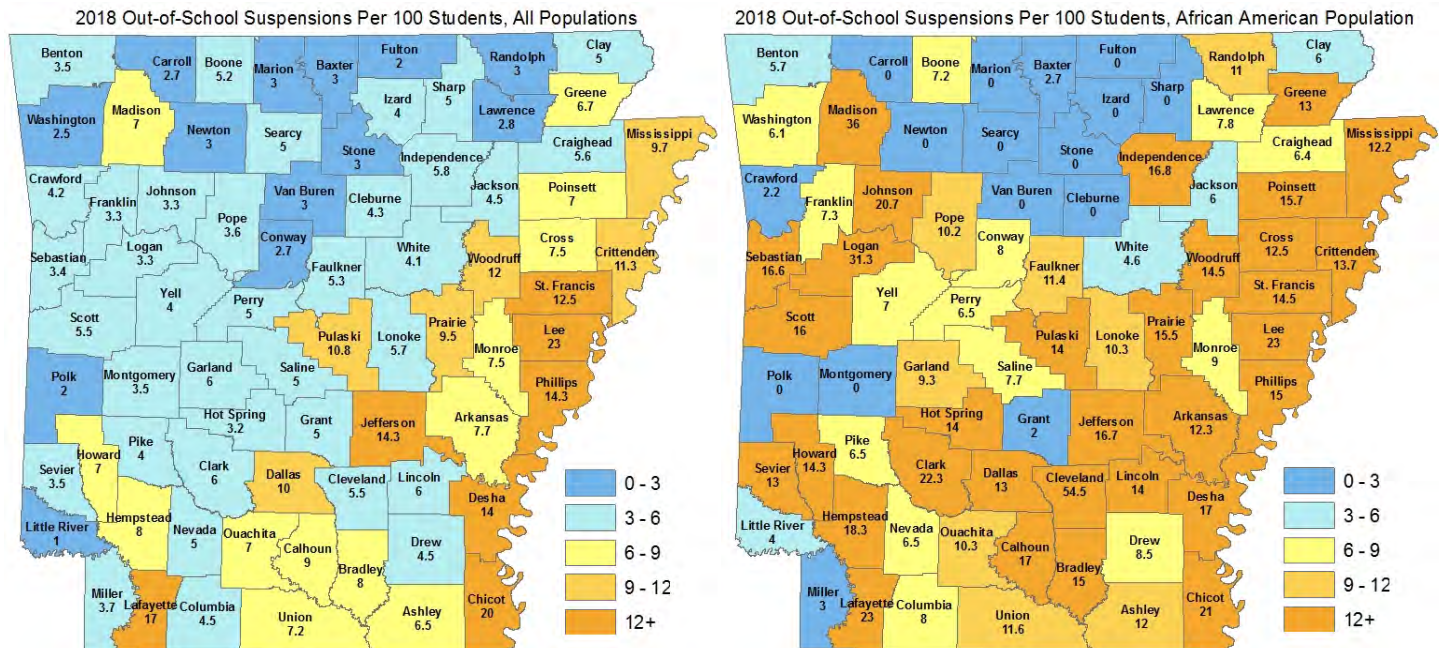
Out-of-School Suspensions in 2015



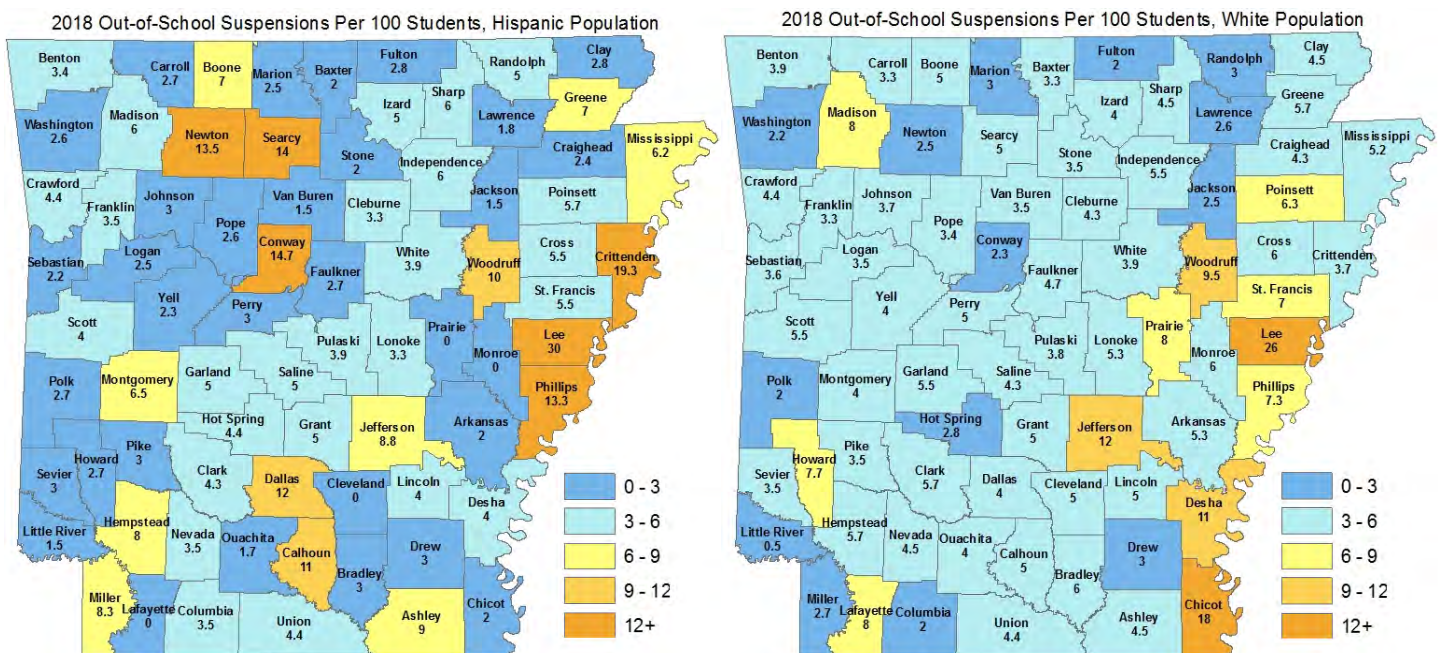
Incidents of out-of-school suspensions were higher in the state's eastern and southern counties. The African American student population had the highest rates of out-of-school suspensions compared to other student population groups. The Hispanic student population saw lower rates of out-of-school suspensions than other student populations but had a few counties with high incident rates, such as Newton, Conway, and Dallas. The incidents of out-of-school suspensions among the white student population were slightly higher than Hispanic student population but were significantly lower than African American student population.



Out-of-School Suspensions in 2018



The rates of out-of-school suspensions in 2018 were relatively unchanged from 2015. The African American student population continued to experience the highest rates of incidents across all groups. The Hispanic student population once again had the lowest rates of incidents relative to all groups. The white student population retained incident rates that were relatively higher than the Hispanic population and lower than the African American population. The white population did see some declines in rates among eastern and southern counties such as Phillips, Pike and Arkansas.



Poverty



68

Counties with declines
in the overall
poverty rate
from 2015 to 2018



59

Counties with declines
in the childhood
poverty rate
from 2015 to 2018

OVERVIEW

This section presents data and maps for the poverty rate and the childhood poverty rate which examines the incidence of economic hardship among individuals in relation to their peers in society. The section examines the prevalence of poverty amongst the overall population and the child population, a particularly vulnerable group.



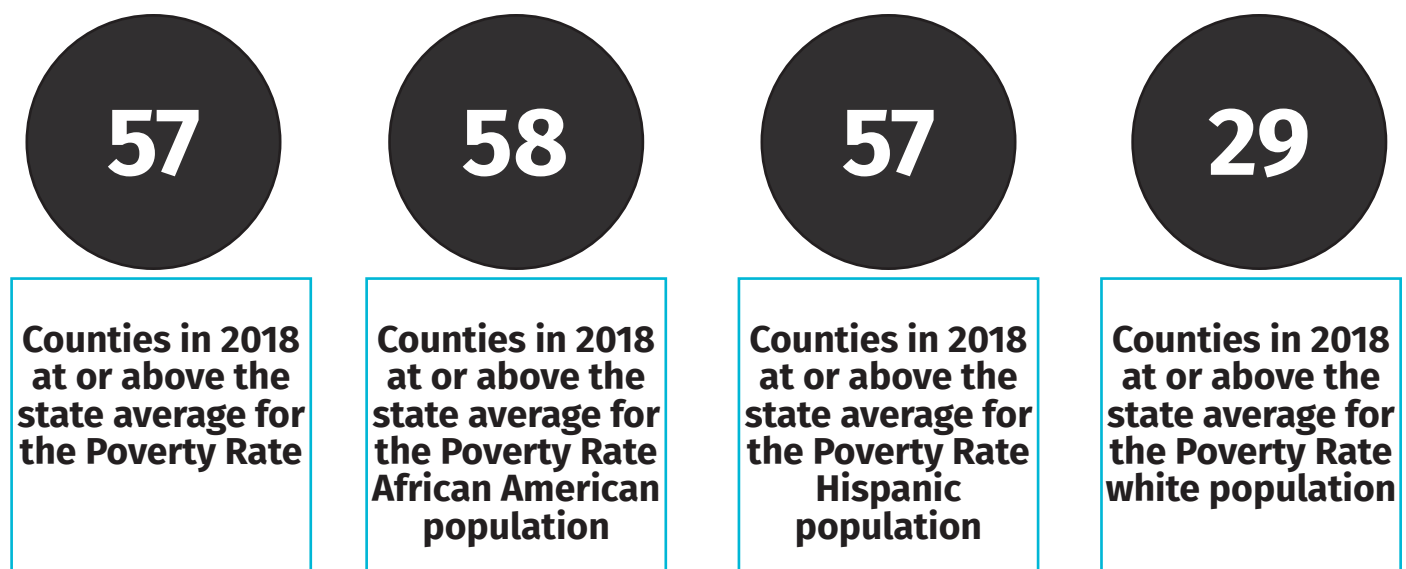
Poverty

An individual's financial, social, mental and physical well-being are impacted by the burden of poverty. The poverty rate is the percentage of the overall population who come from households which are below certain income thresholds.

The 2018 income thresholds for poverty vary from \$12,784 for a single person household to \$25,701 for a four person household. A household with nine or more persons is considered impoverished if their income falls below \$51,393.

The average poverty rate in the state of Arkansas was 16.8 percent in 2018.

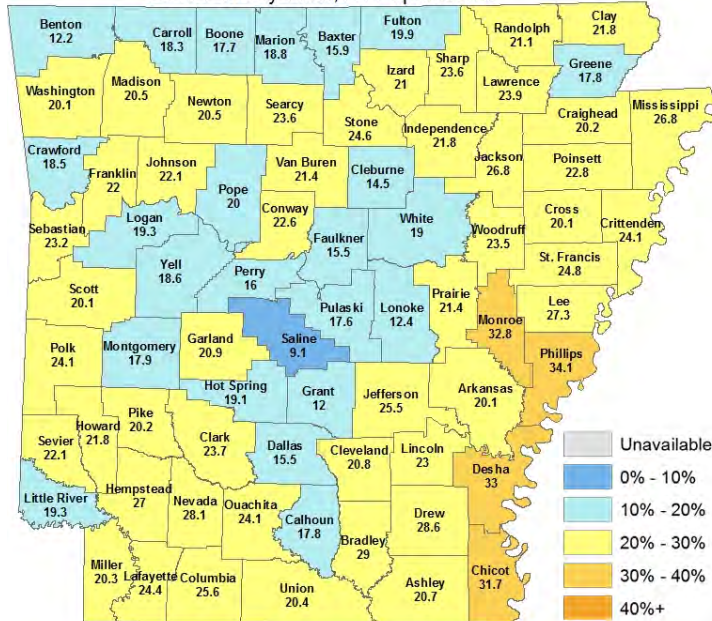
The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The data is reported on a county level and the section's maps adhere to this detail. Counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.



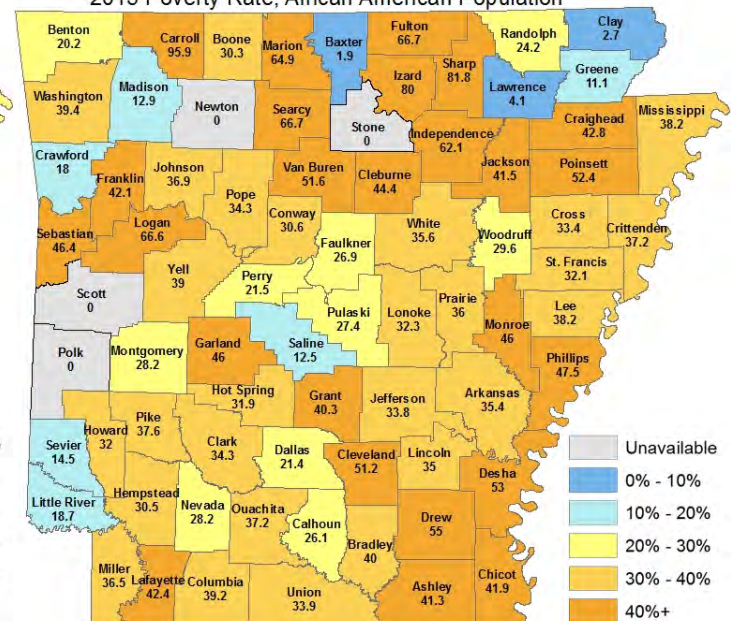
The poverty rate in Arkansas varied for the different racial and ethnic groups but over time, the poverty rates declined for each population. In general, the metro areas of the state had lower poverty rates which mirrors national trends. The African American and Hispanic populations had the highest poverty rates in the state, although each group had significant declines over the period. The white population had fairly consistent poverty rates across many counties which continued as poverty rates declined in latter years.

Poverty in 2015

2015 Poverty Rate, All Populations

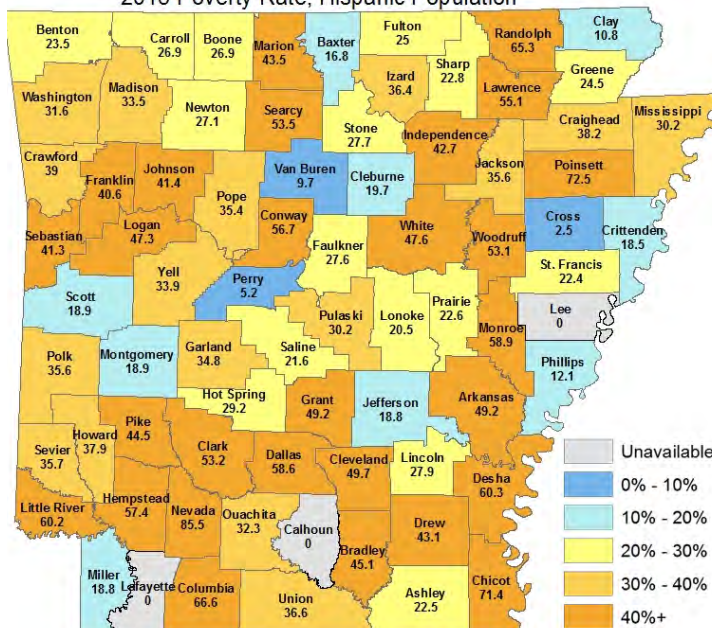


2015 Poverty Rate, African American Population

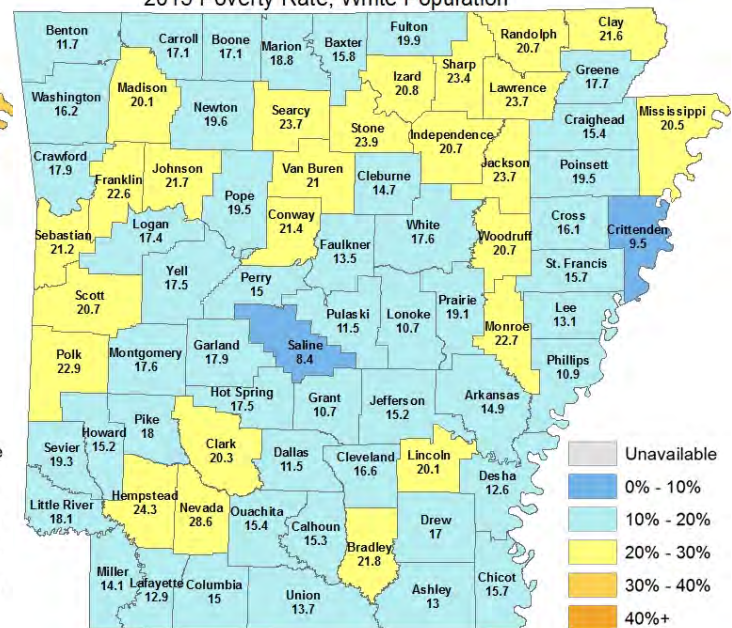


The incidence of poverty varied largely by geographic location and race and ethnicity across Arkansas in 2015. The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas displayed generally lower poverty rates than the rest of the state. The African American and Hispanic populations had many counties with higher poverty rates than the state average, 18.7 percent. The African American and Hispanic populations also had higher poverty rates than the white population in most counties across Arkansas; 68 and 69 counties, respectively.

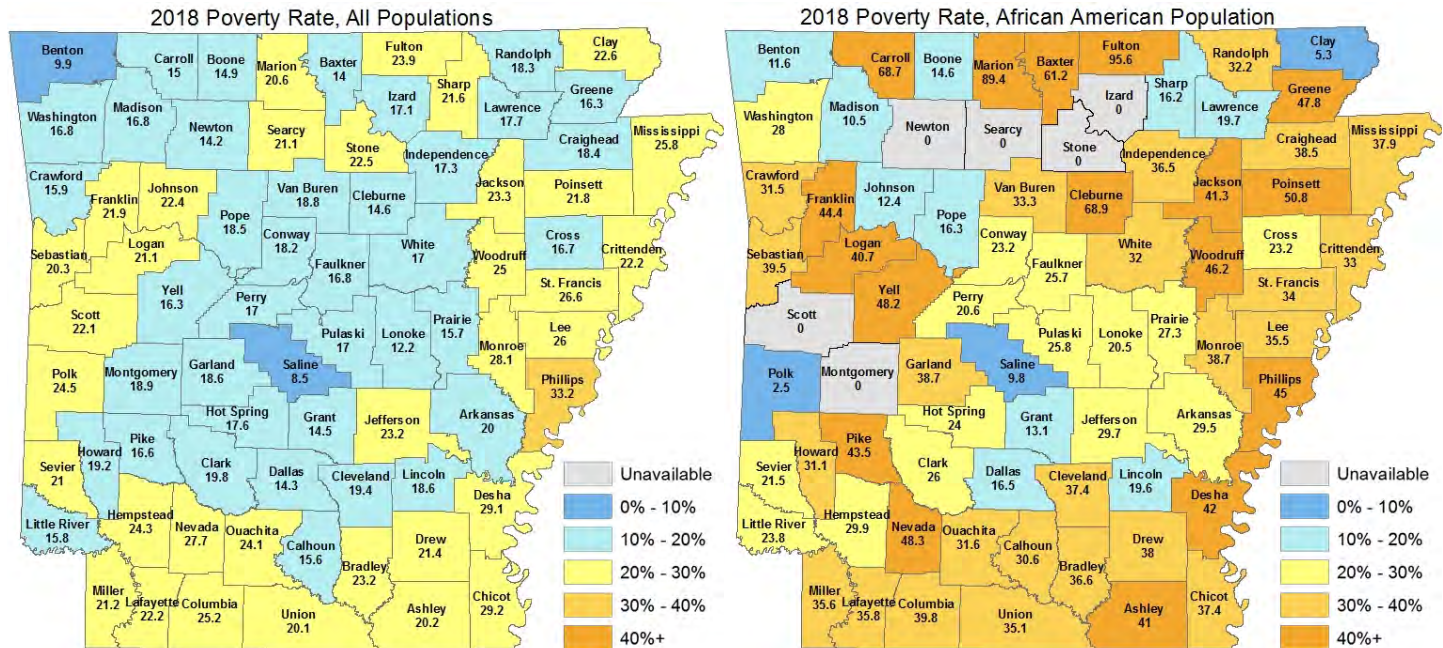
2015 Poverty Rate, Hispanic Population



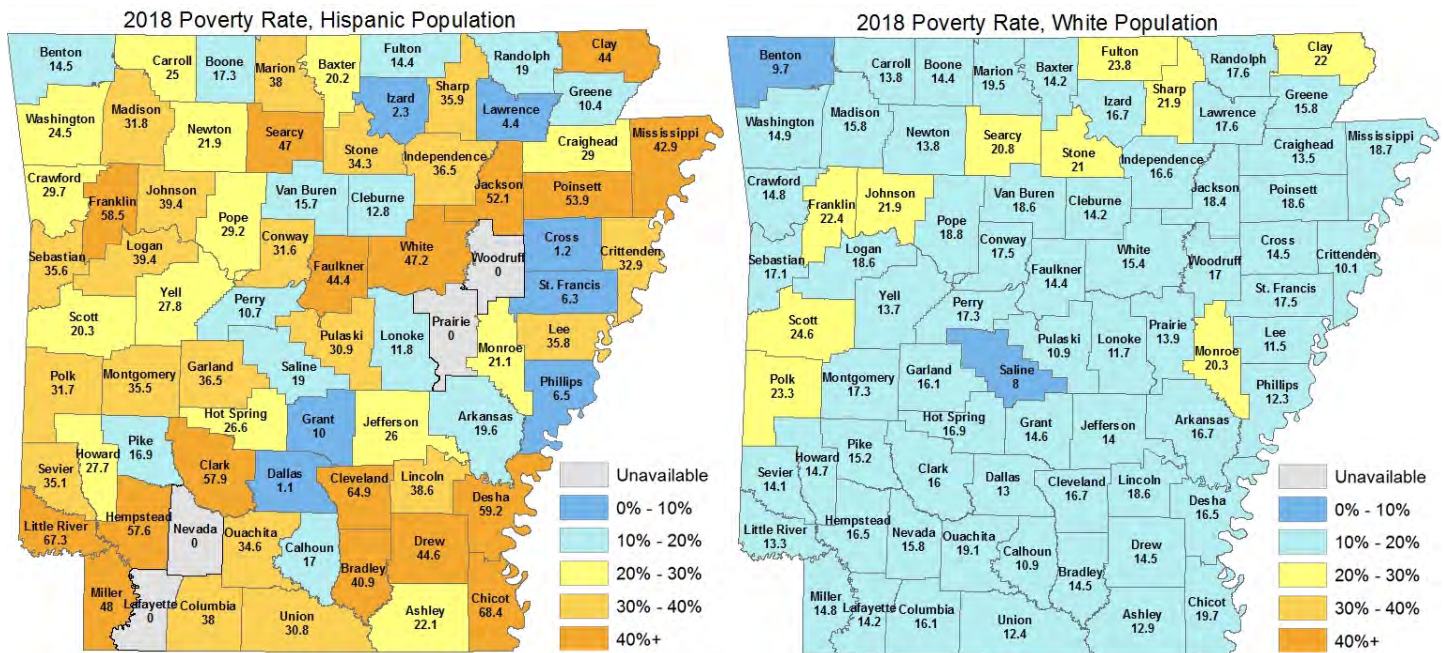
2015 Poverty Rate, White Population



Poverty in 2018



The strong economy in recent years provided renewed economic opportunities to the people of Arkansas and as such the poverty rate declined among each population group from 2015. The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas continued to show relatively lower poverty rates than the rest of the state. The African American and Hispanic populations once again had many counties with higher poverty rates than the state average of 16.8 percent, but the two groups also saw declines in 51 and 48 counties, respectively. The white population saw consistent declines in poverty across 52 counties. The white population continued to have lower poverty rates than the African American and Hispanic populations.

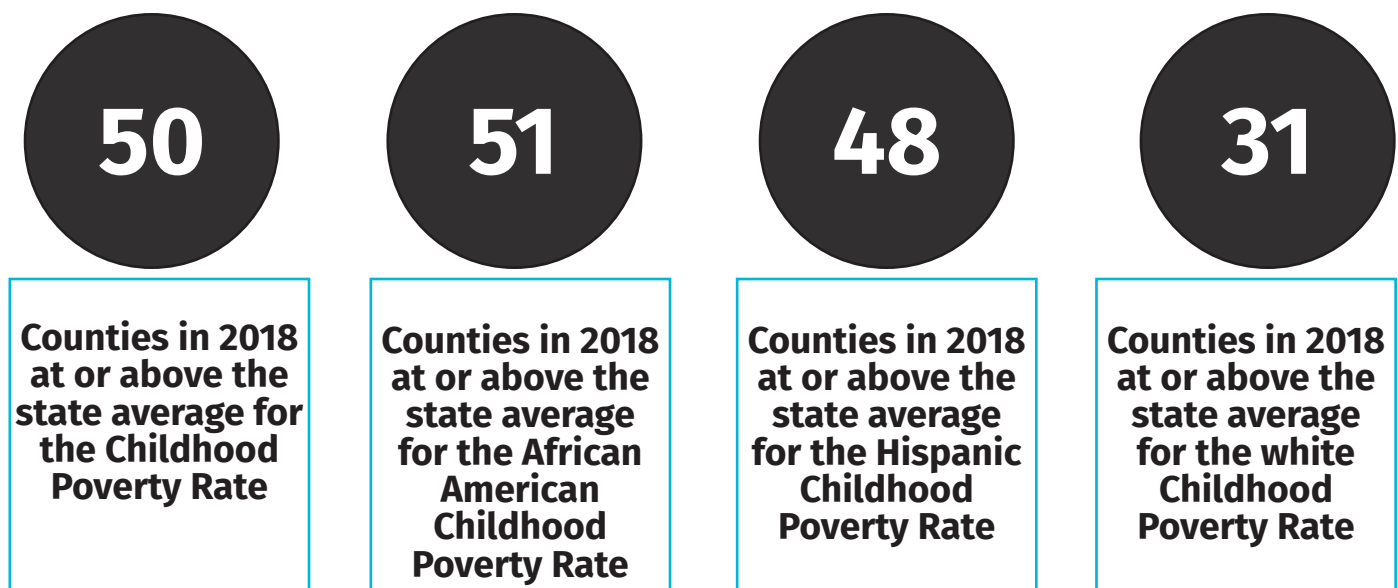


Childhood Poverty

The burden of childhood poverty presents many obstacles for children in their development into healthy, productive, and happy members of society. The childhood poverty rate is the percentage of the overall child population, individuals below the age of 18 years, who come from households which are below certain income thresholds.

The average childhood poverty rate in Arkansas was 24.7 percent in 2018.

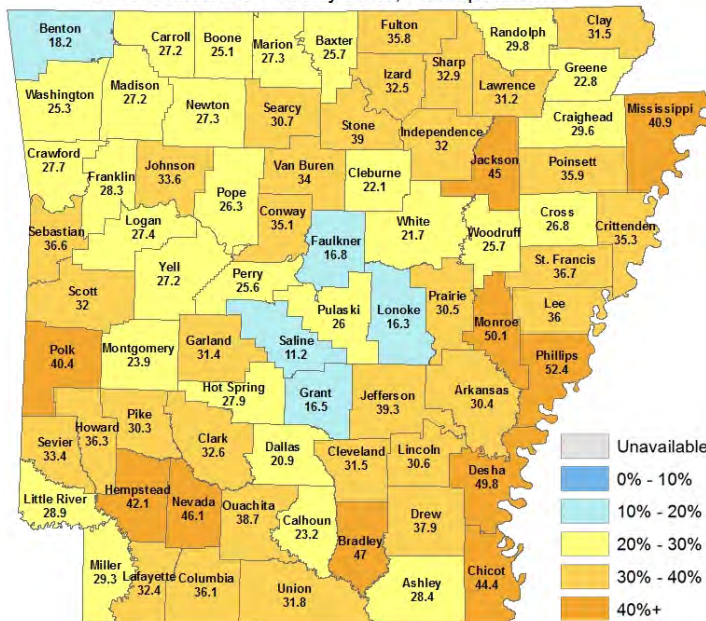
The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The data is reported on a county level and the section's maps adhere to this detail. Counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.



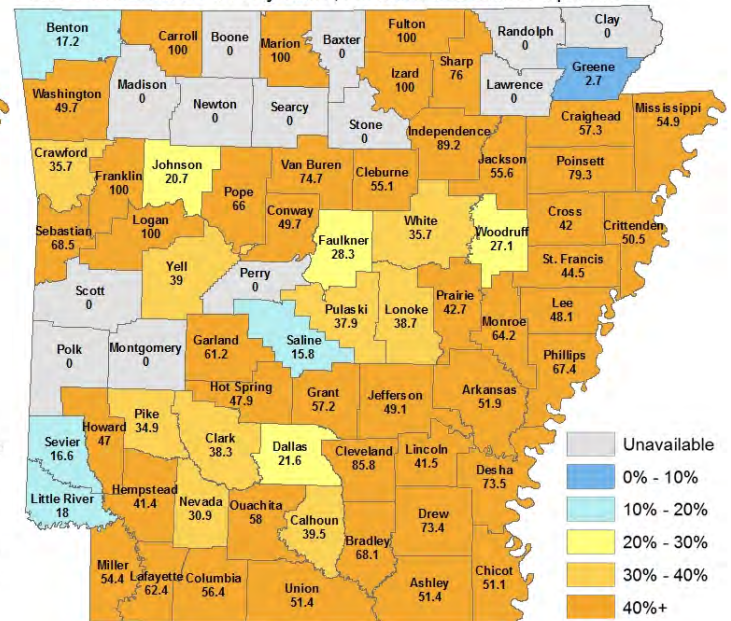
Overall childhood poverty was higher across the state of Arkansas, but between 2015 and 2018 there was a decline in childhood poverty for each population group. The metro areas observed generally lower rates of childhood poverty. The African American and Hispanic populations had high childhood poverty rates, comparatively. Outside of many metro areas in Arkansas, the white population had numerous counties with high childhood poverty rates but the childhood poverty rates for whites were lower than the rates for the African American and Hispanic populations.

Childhood Poverty in 2015

2015 Childhood Poverty Rate, All Populations

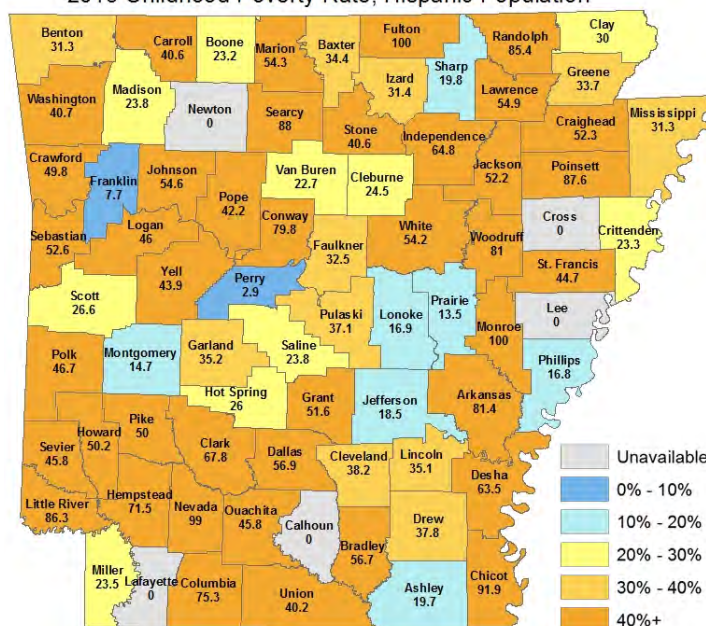


2015 Childhood Poverty Rate, African American Population

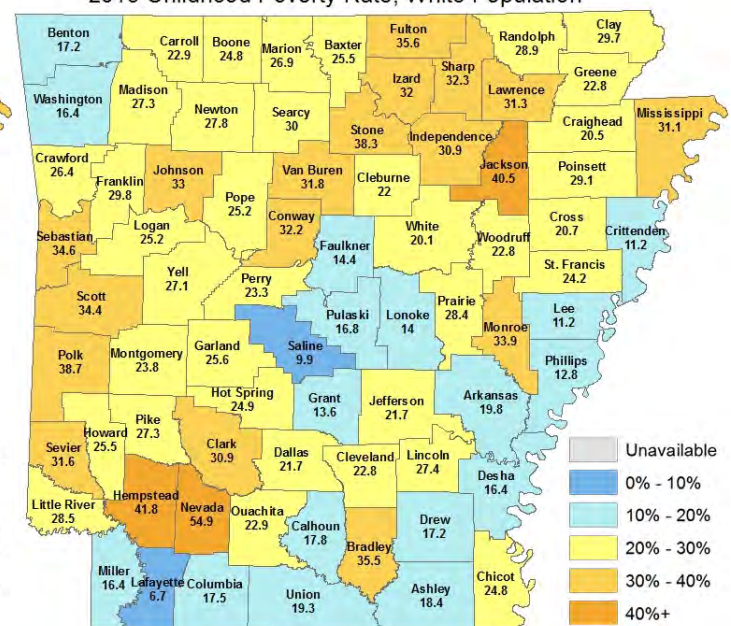


Childhood poverty was persistent for each population group across Arkansas in 2015. The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas showed slightly better results than the rest of the state. The African American and Hispanic childhood poverty rates were higher than the state average, 27.6 percent, in most counties across Arkansas. The rates of white childhood poverty were generally lower than the statewide average and the rates among the African American and Hispanic populations.

2015 Childhood Poverty Rate, Hispanic Population

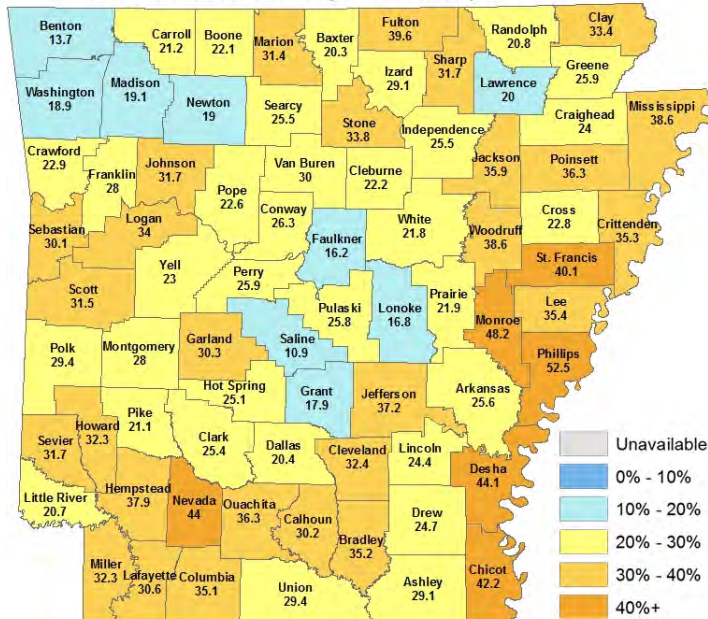


2015 Childhood Poverty Rate, White Population

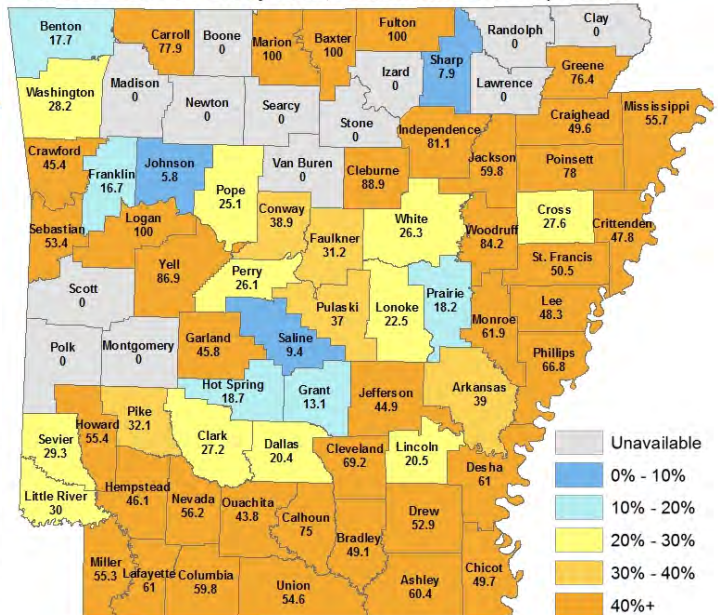


Childhood Poverty in 2018

2018 Childhood Poverty Rate, All Populations

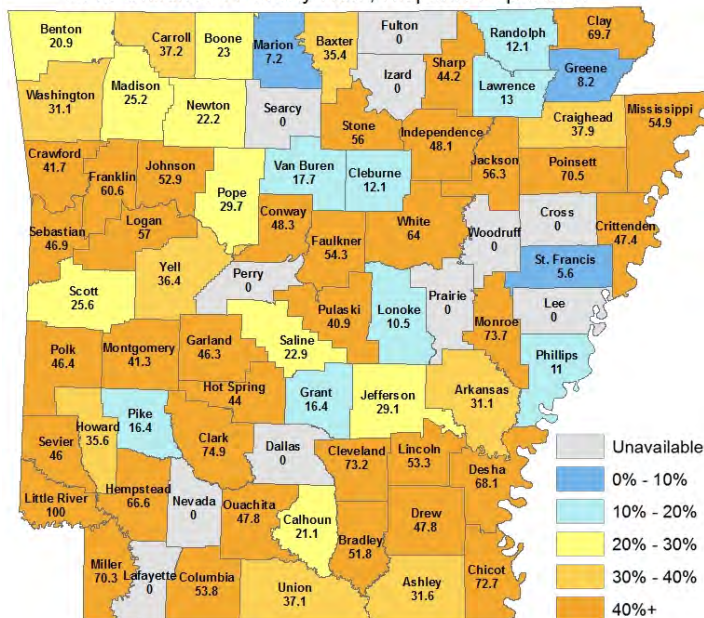


2018 Childhood Poverty Rate, African American Population

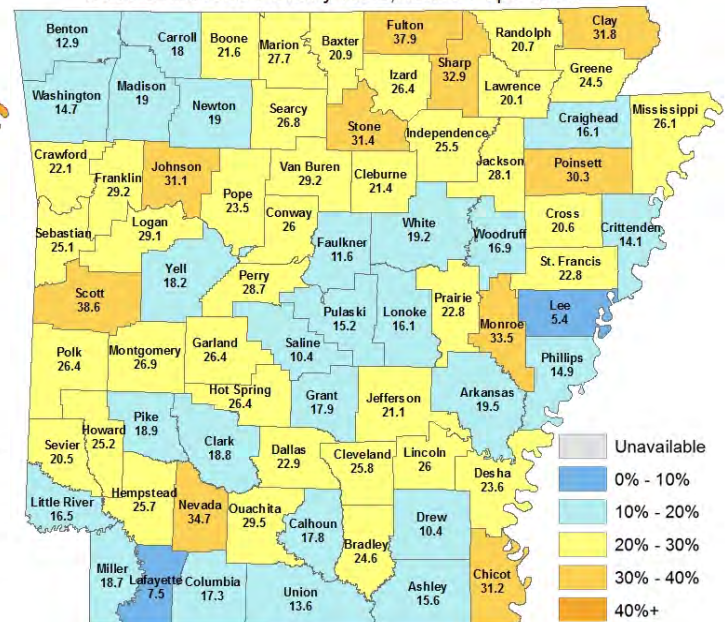


The childhood poverty rates declined as the economy grew in Arkansas between 2015 and 2018. The African American and Hispanic childhood poverty rates were greater than the state average, 24.7 percent, in a majority of counties. However, the magnitude of childhood poverty did decline across many counties for the African American and Hispanic populations; in 38 and 43 counties, respectively. The white childhood poverty rates decreased in 50 counties from 2015. The white population once again had childhood poverty rates which were less than the rates for African American and Hispanic children.

2018 Childhood Poverty Rate, Hispanic Population



2018 Childhood Poverty Rate, White Population



Economic Indicators

41

Counties with
increases in the
Homeownership
Rate from
2015 to 2018

28

Counties with
increases in the
Employment to
Population
Ratio from
2015 to 2018

46

Counties with
increases in
the Labor Force
Participation
Rate from
2015 to 2018

67

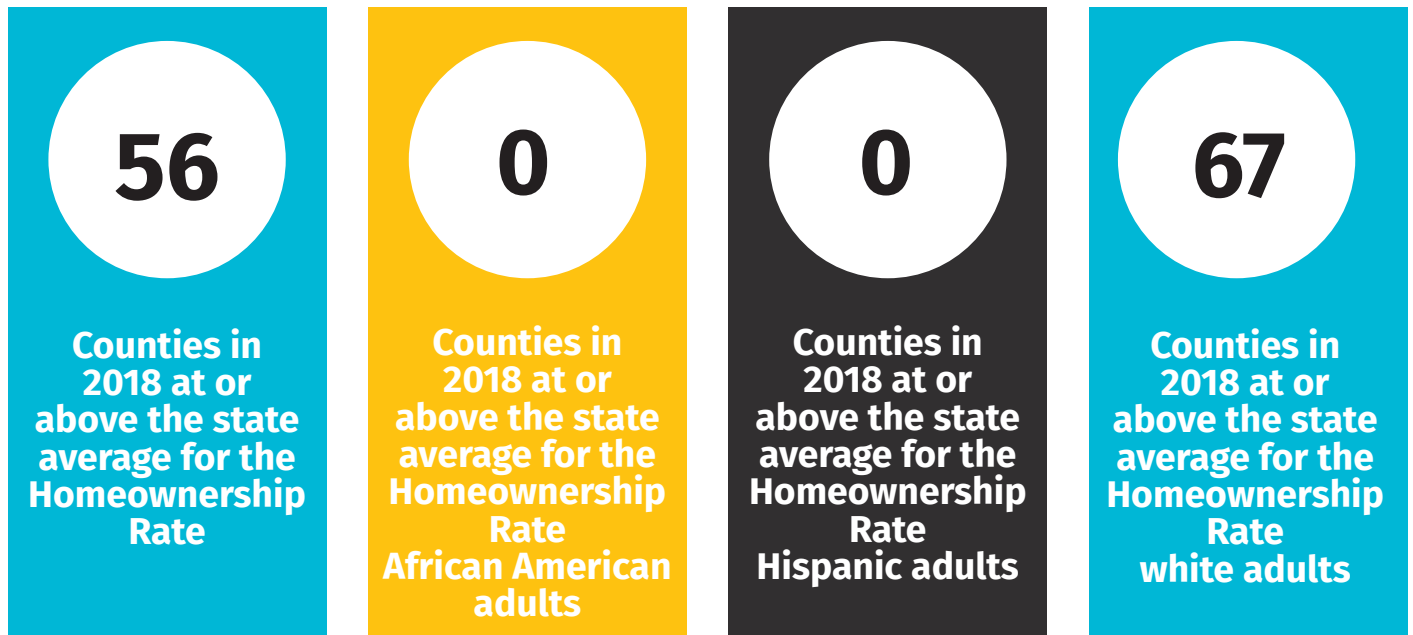
Counties with
declines in the
Unemployment
Rate from
2015 to 2018

OVERVIEW

The economic indicators section presents data and maps for the homeownership rate; employment to population ratio; labor force participation rate; and unemployment rate. The four indicators are associated with involvement in the economy; specifically, asset building through homeownership and various aspects of participation in the labor market.



Homeownership



Homeownership provides stability through a permanent residence and wealth building from equity acquired over time in the home. Many individuals and families utilize homeownership to build a strong foundation for themselves and their children. The homeownership rate is the percent of individuals who reside in a housing unit which they own.

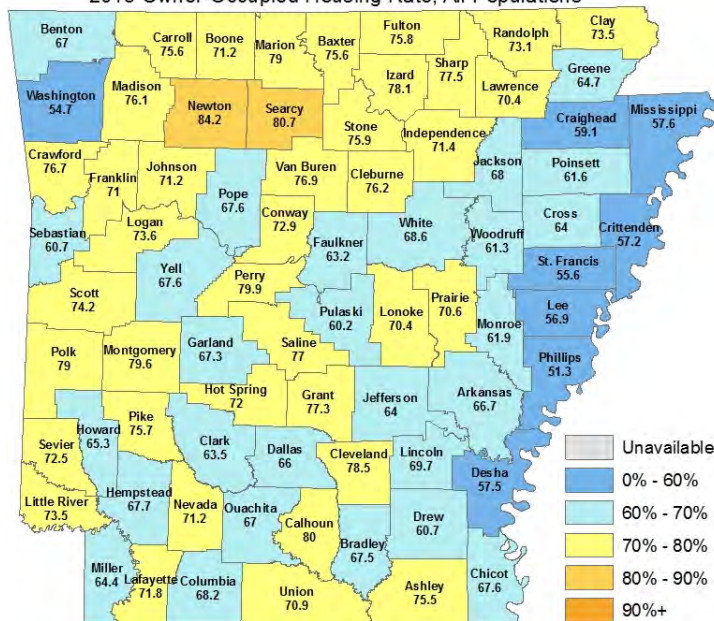
The average homeownership rate in Arkansas was 64.7 percent in 2018.

The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The data is reported on a county level but counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.

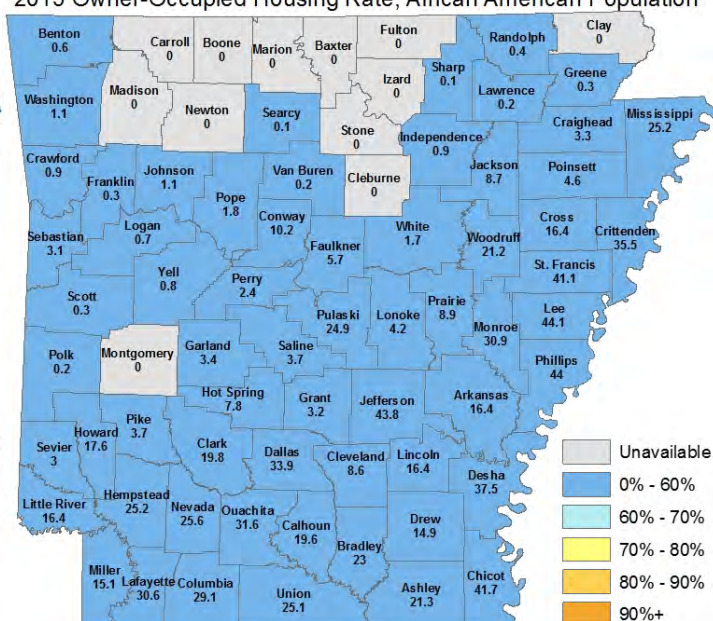
While the homeownership rates varied significantly among the different racial and ethnic groups in Arkansas, the rates remained fairly constant between 2015 and 2018 for each group. The white population displayed a high rate of homeownership, especially across the northern and western regions of the state. The African American and Hispanic populations had significantly lower homeownership rates than the white population. The African American and Hispanic populations did not have homeownership rates comparable to the white population in any county in Arkansas.

Homeownership in 2015

2015 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, All Populations

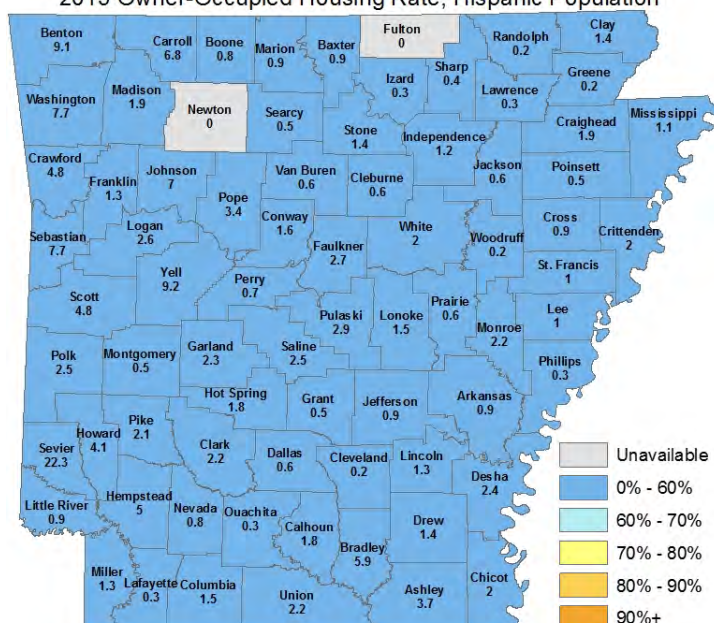


2015 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, African American Population

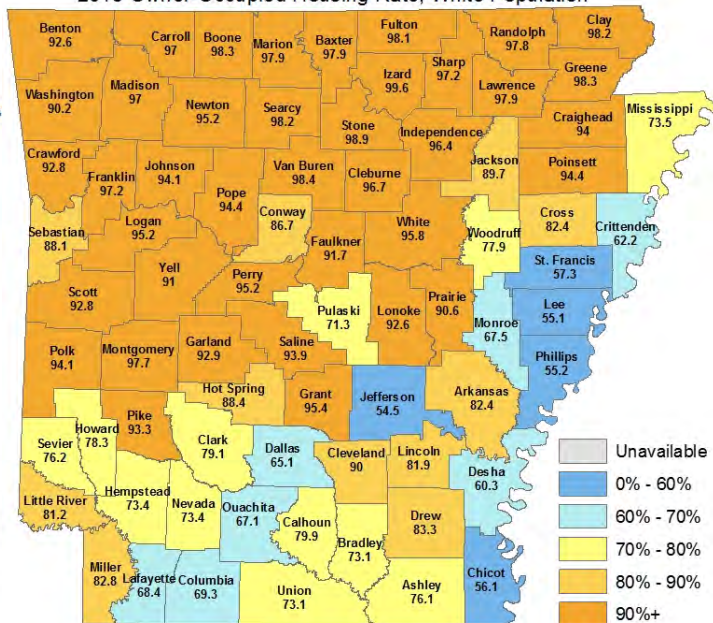


The homeownership rates differed immensely among the various populations in Arkansas in 2015. The African American and Hispanic populations had very low rates of homeownership across all counties in the state. The homeownership rates for African Americans and Hispanics were significantly lower than the state average of 67.1 percent. The white population had higher rates of homeownership, especially among the northern and western regions of the state. The rates of homeownership among the white population were substantially higher than the rates for the African American and Hispanic populations across all counties.

2015 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, Hispanic Population

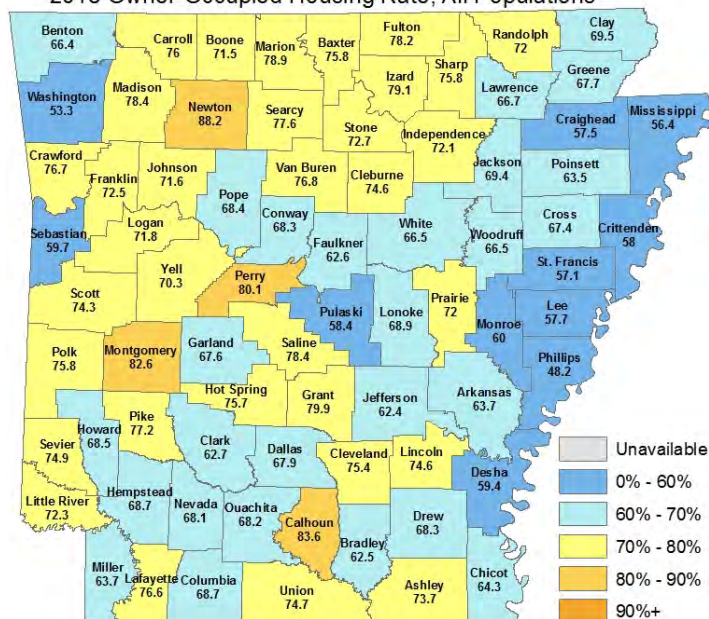


2015 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, White Population

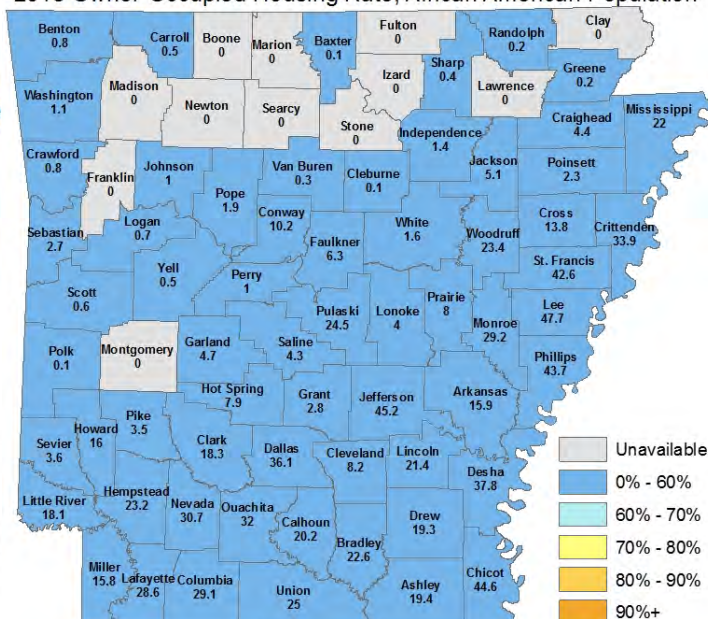


Homeownership in 2018

2018 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, All Populations

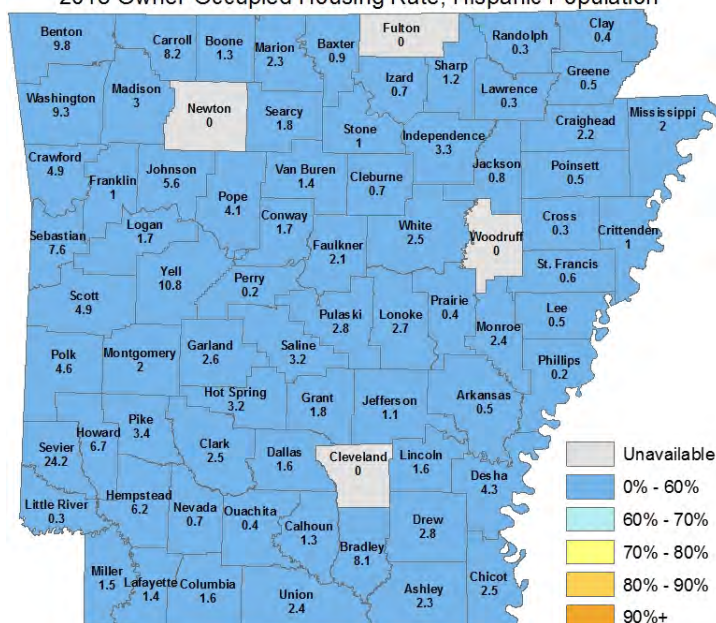


2018 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, African American Population

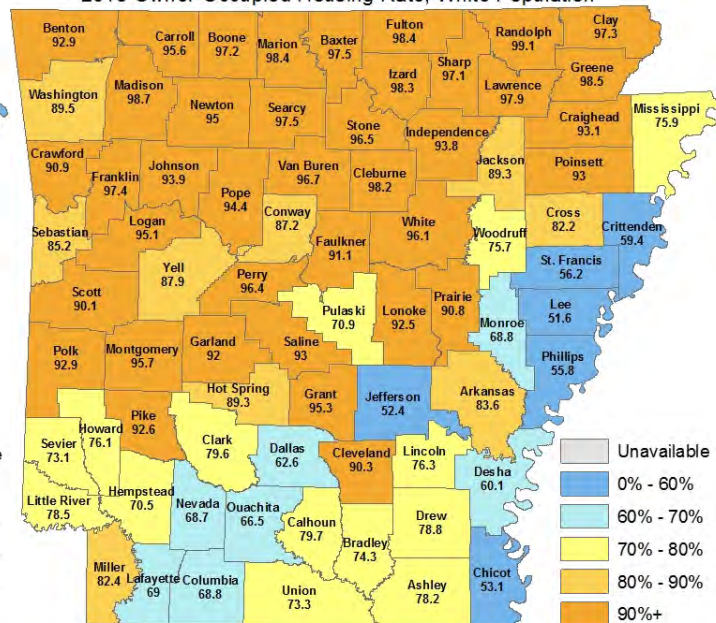


The rates of homeownership were slightly changed from 2015 but the general trends in Arkansas remained the same. The African American, Hispanic and white populations saw increases in homeownership rates in 27, 48 and 23 counties, respectively. The African American and Hispanic populations continued to have homeownership rates which were significantly lower than the state average, 64.7 percent. The white population once again had homeownership rates which were considerably higher than rates for the African American and Hispanic populations across all counties.

2018 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, Hispanic Population



2018 Owner-Occupied Housing Rate, White Population



Employment to Population Ratio

12

Counties in 2018
at or above the
state average for
the Employment
to Population
Ratio

13

Counties in 2018
at or above the
state average
for the African
American
Employment to
Population Ratio

56

Counties in 2018
at or above the
state average
for the Hispanic
Employment to
Population Ratio

13

Counties in 2018
at or above the
state average
for the white
Employment to
Population Ratio

The employment to population ratio is the proportion of all employed adults (16 years and older) to the civilian noninstitutional adult population (16 years and older). The employment to population ratio captures a measure of the potential for labor force participation in a society.

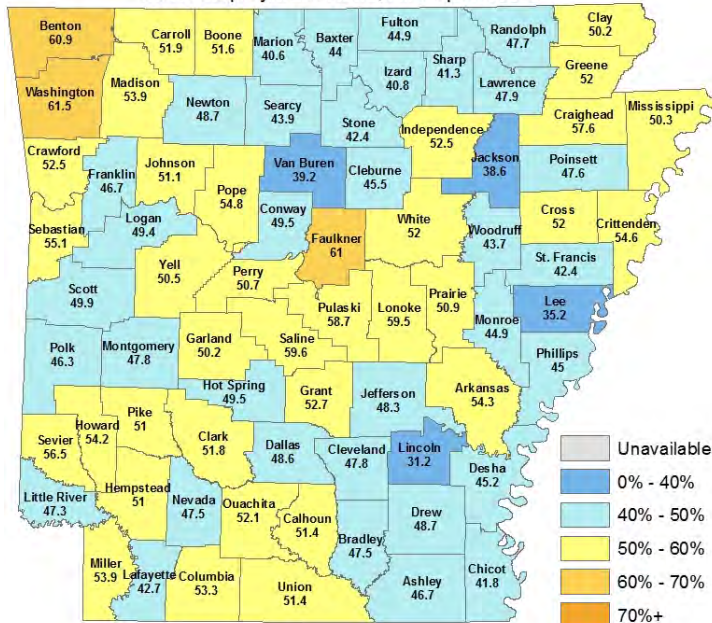
The average employment to population ratio in Arkansas was 54.7 percent in 2018.

The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The data is reported on a county level and counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.

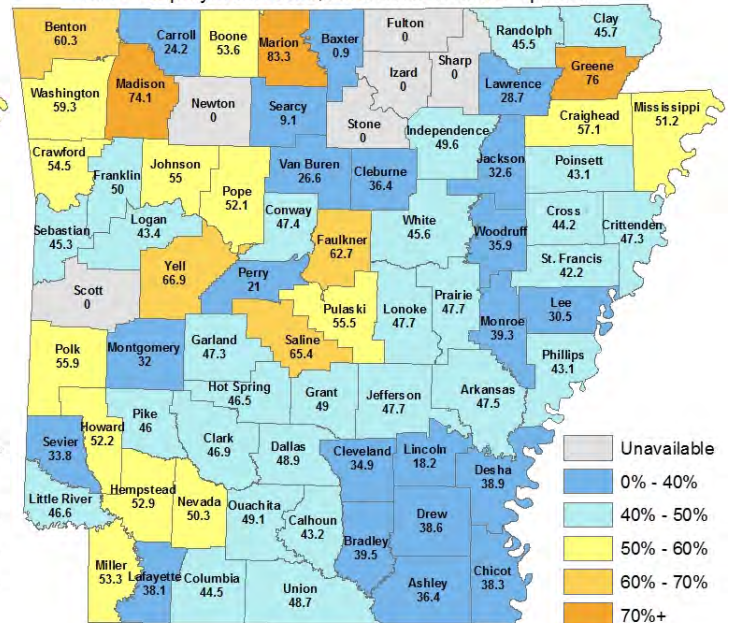


Employment to Population Ratio in 2015

2015 Employment Ratio, All Populations

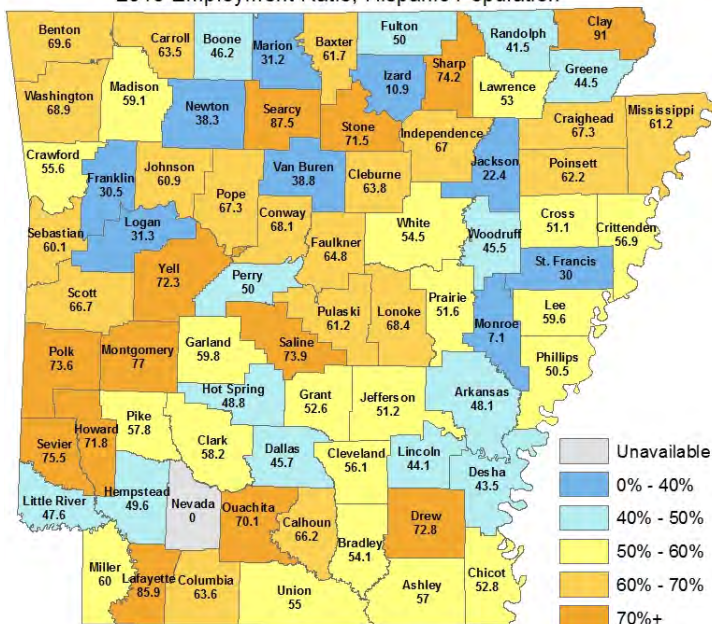


2015 Employment Ratio, African American Population

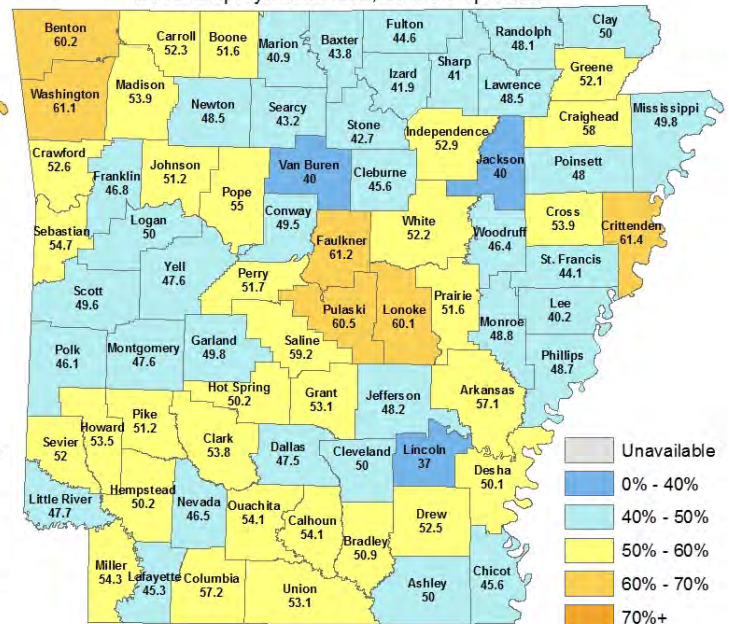


The employment to population ratio varied by geographic location and population group for Arkansas in 2015. The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas displayed generally higher employment ratios than the rest of Arkansas. The African American population had lower employment ratios than the other populations, but some counties such as Marion and Greene had high employment ratios. The Hispanic population had higher employment ratios than the other populations. The white population had relatively lower employment ratios than the Hispanic population but higher employment ratios than the African American population.

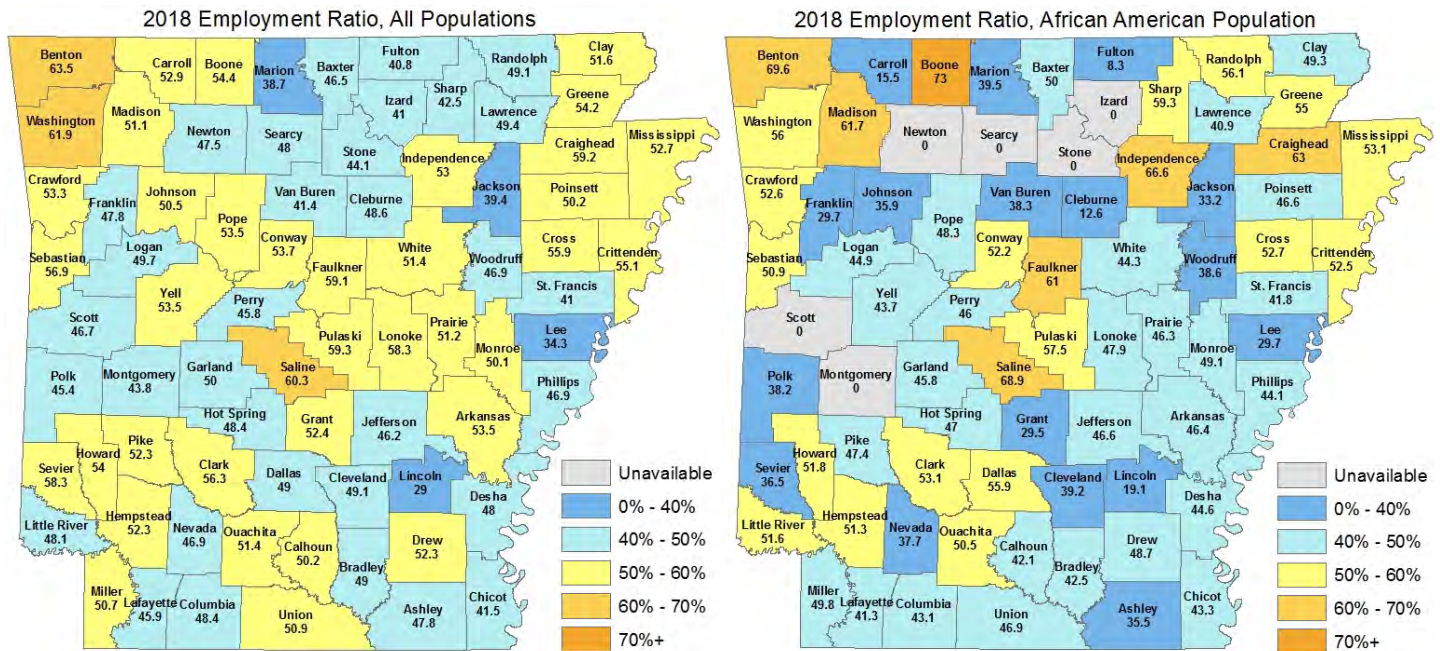
2015 Employment Ratio, Hispanic Population



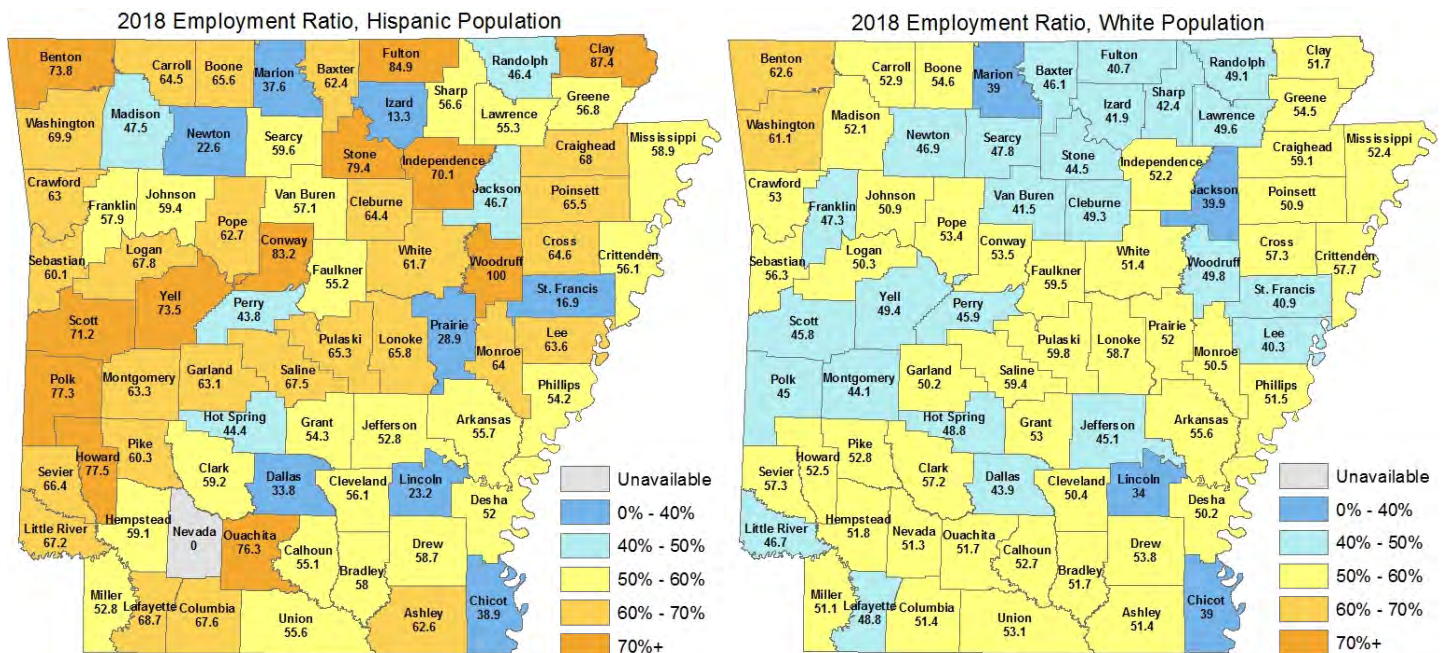
2015 Employment Ratio, White Population



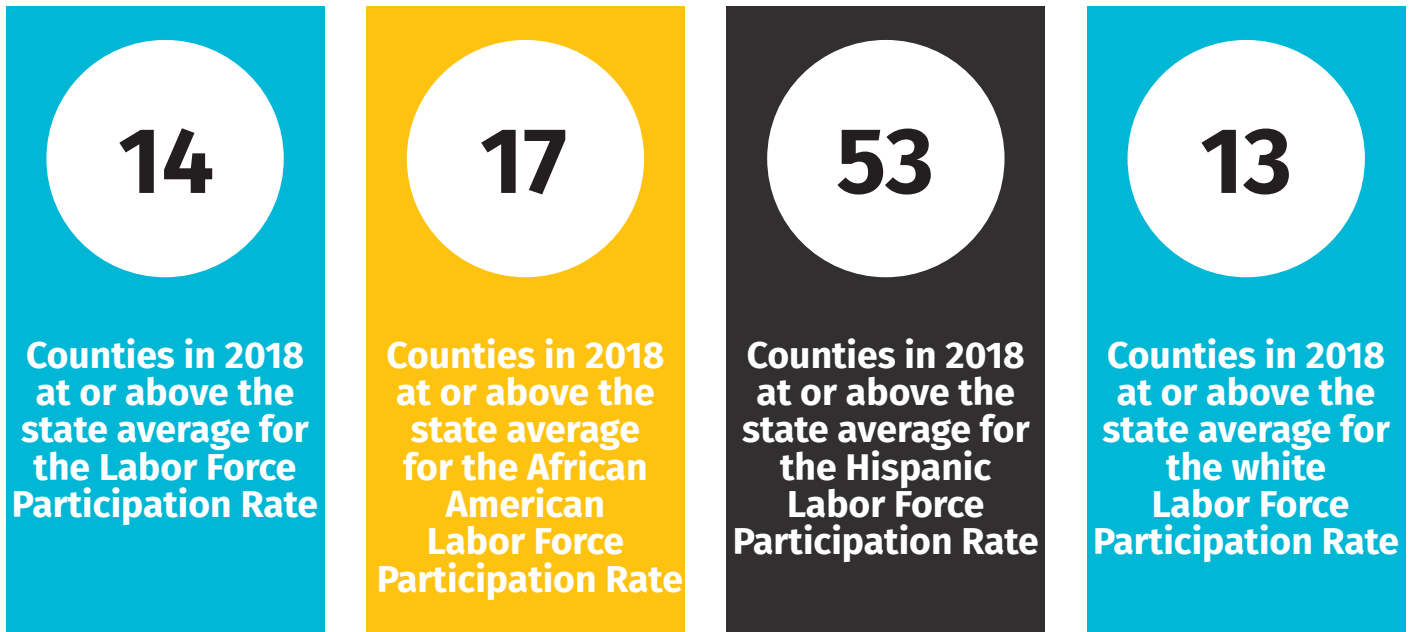
Employment to Population Ratio in 2018



The employment to population ratio increased for each population group from 2015 to 2018. The African American, Hispanic, and white populations had increases in their employment ratios in 38, 47, and 41 counties, respectively. The African American population continued to have lower employment ratios than other populations. The Hispanic population once again had higher employment ratios than other populations. The white population saw a slight decline in employment ratios among some central counties, such as Pulaski, Faulkner, and Lonoke. The white population's employment ratio remained lower than the ratio for the Hispanic population but higher than the ratio for African Americans.



Labor Force Participation Rate



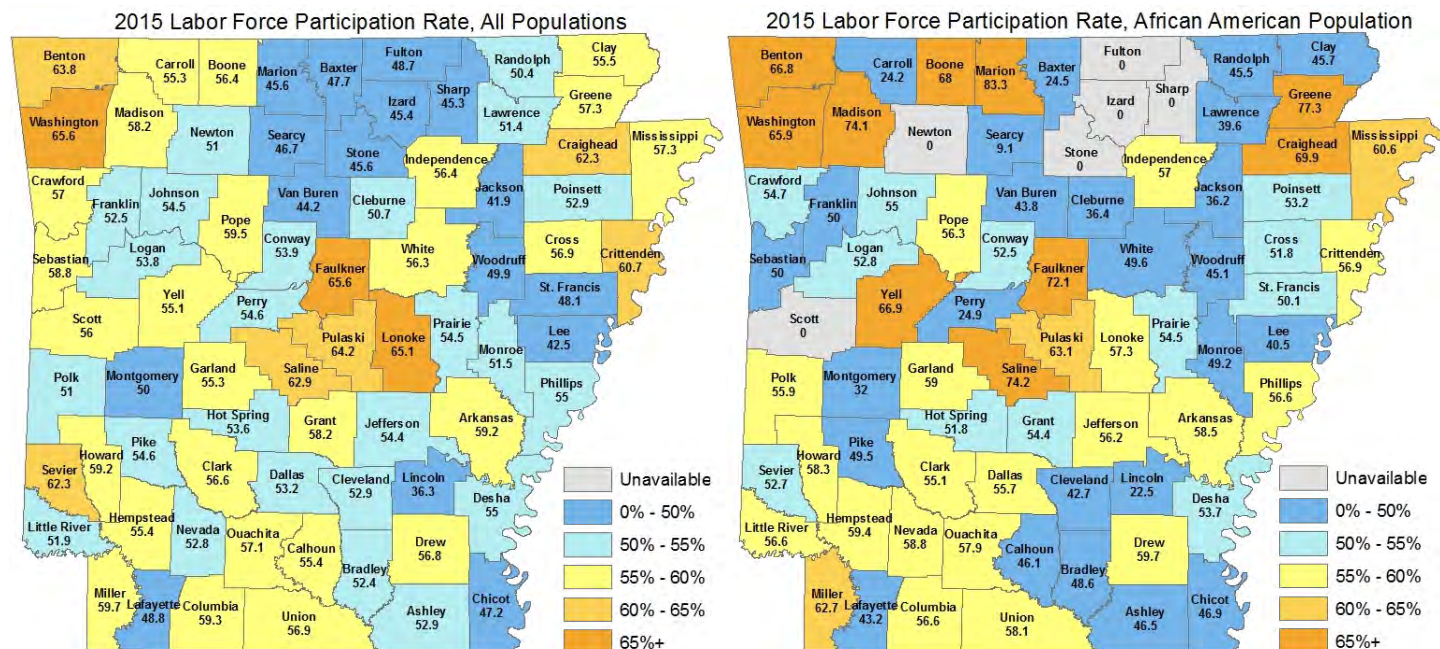
The labor force participation rate is the proportion of the total adult population (16 years and older) who are employed or seeking employment to the civilian noninstitutional adult population (16 years and older).

The average labor force participation rate in Arkansas was 58 percent in 2018.

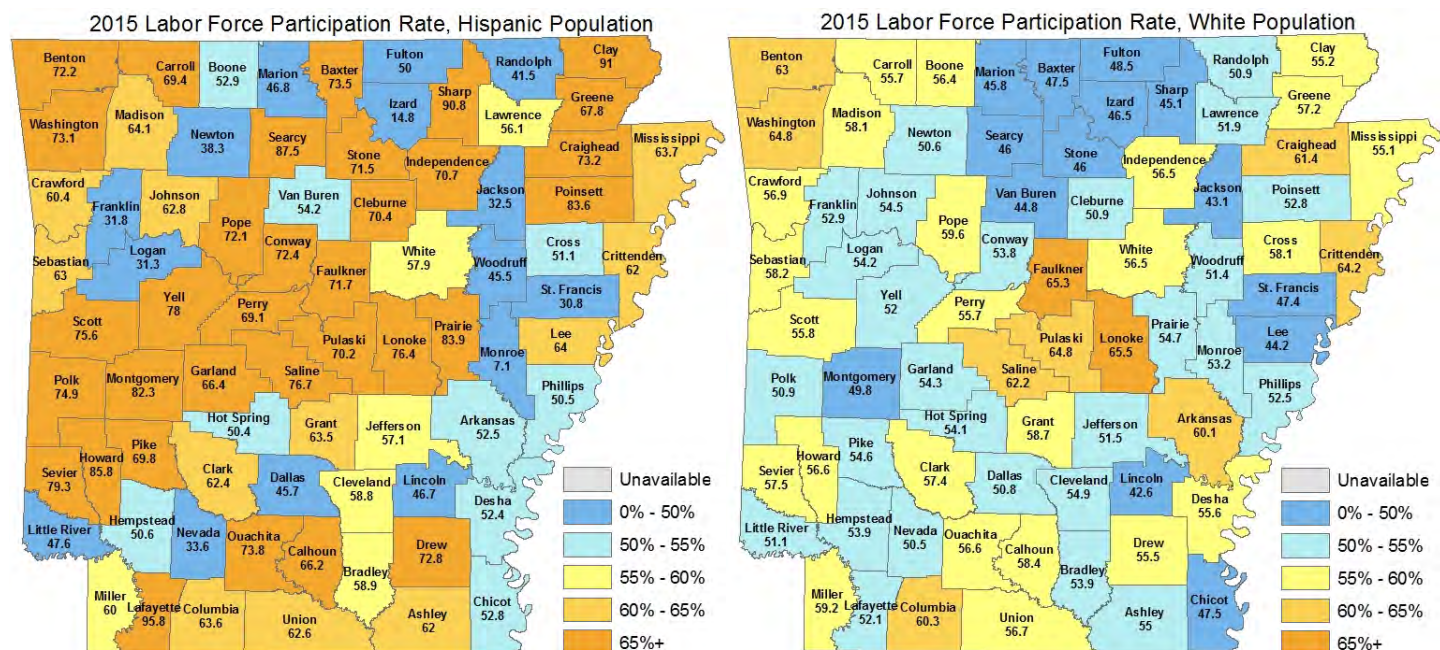
The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The data is reported on a county level and counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.



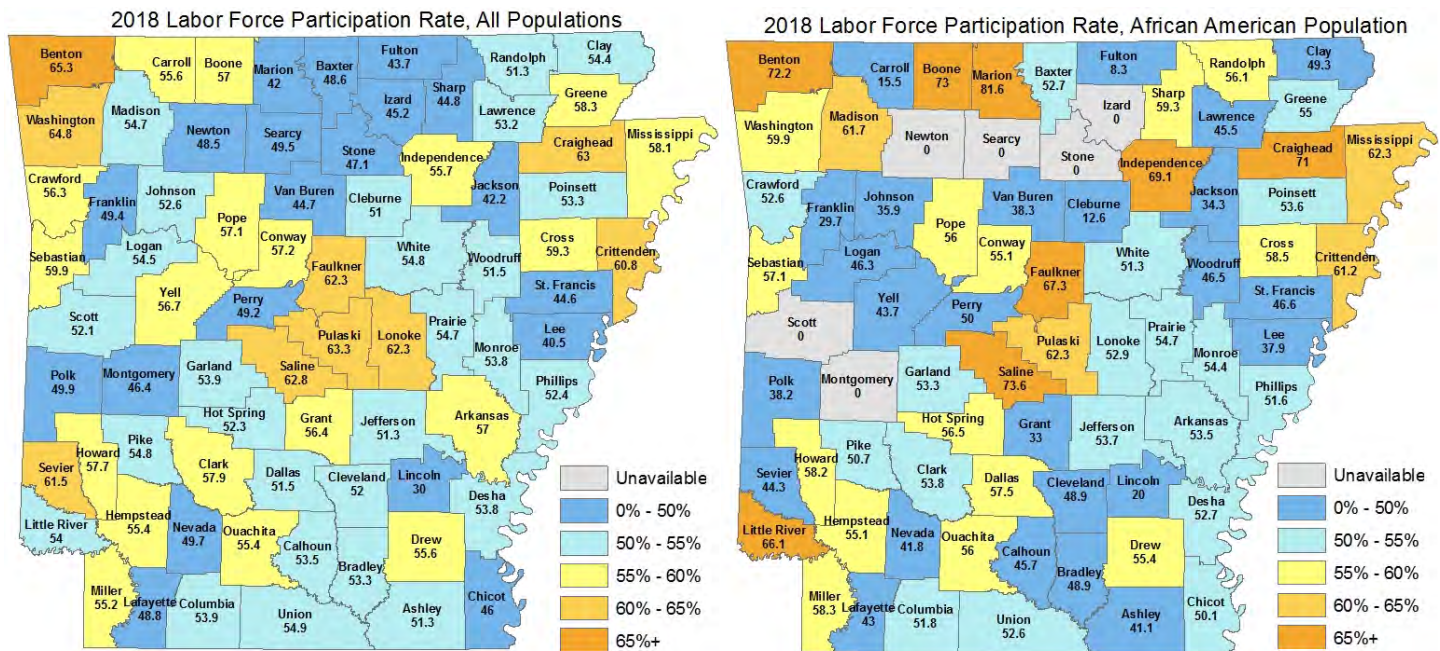
Labor Force Participation in 2015



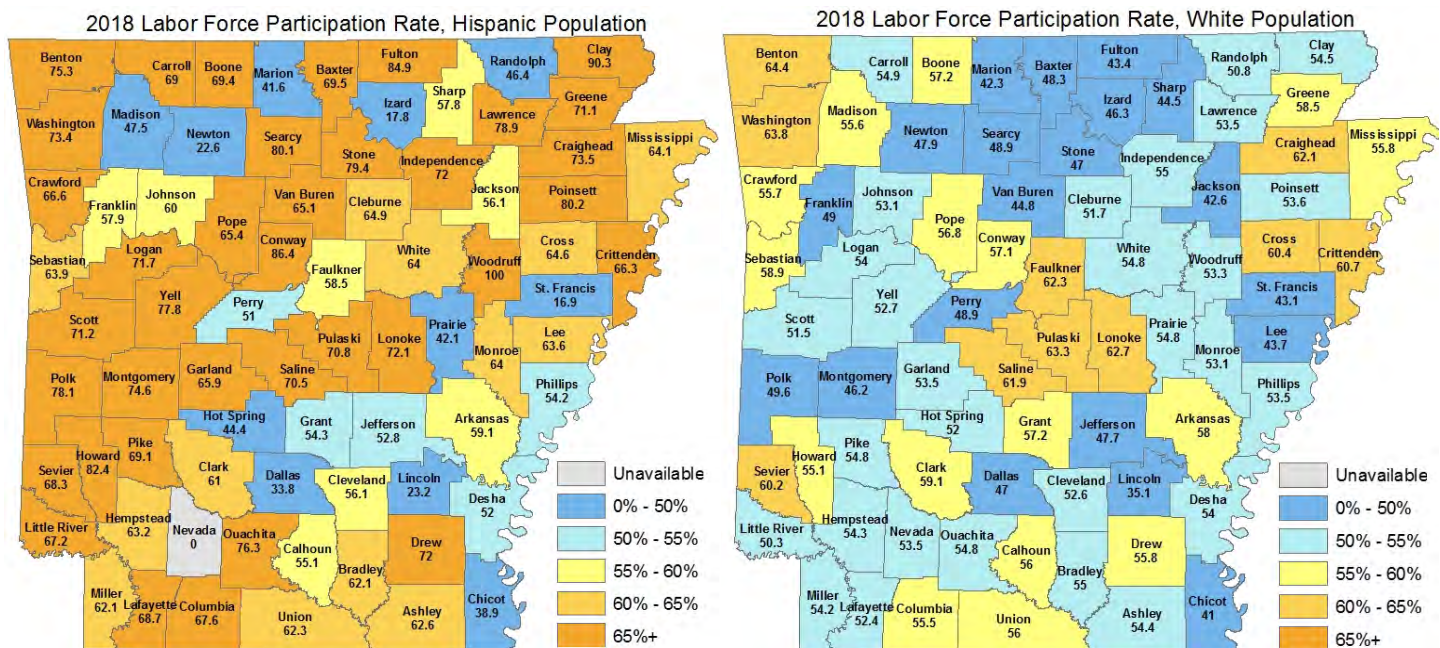
The labor force participation rate differed by geographic location and population group across Arkansas in 2015. The metro areas (Northwest, Central, Jonesboro, and Fort Smith) saw higher rates of participation than the rest of the state. The African American population had lower participation rates than other groups, but had high rates in the Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas metro areas. The Hispanic population had much higher participation rates than other groups. The white population had relatively lower participation rates than the Hispanic population but participation rates were higher than for the African American population.



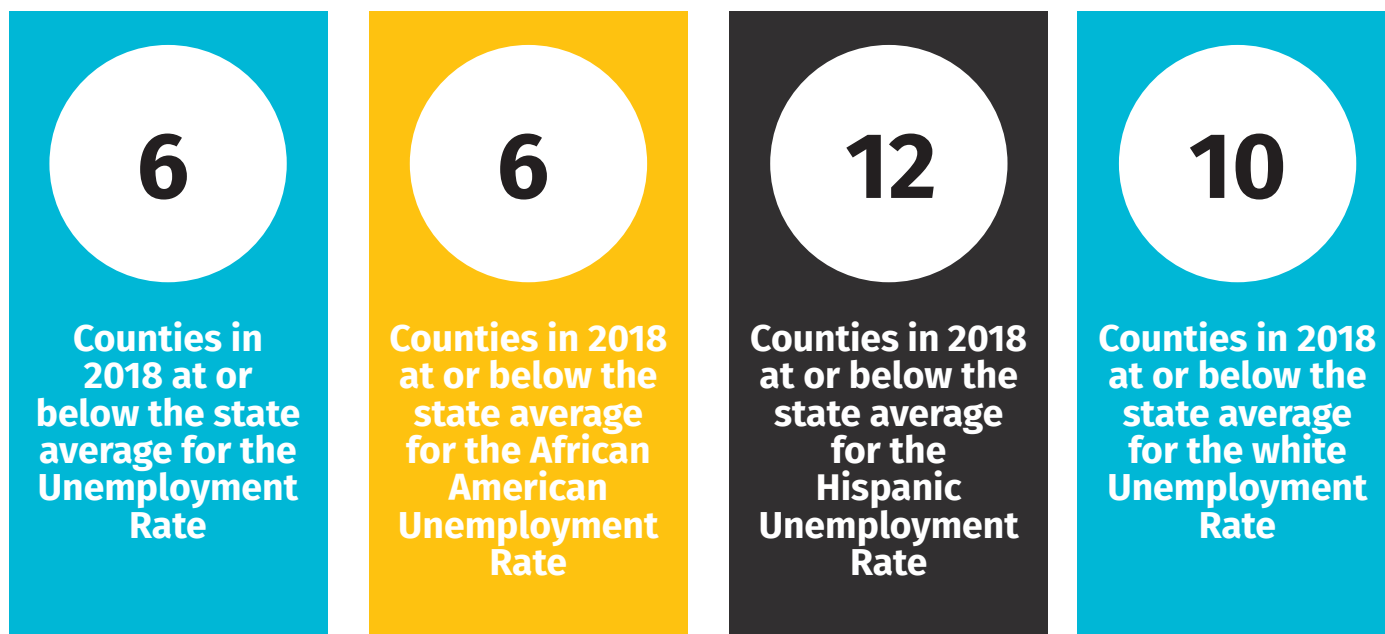
Labor Force Participation in 2018



Each population group saw increases in labor force participation rates across the state, but most gains were modest in magnitude. The African American population continued to have lower participation rates than other groups while the Hispanic population remained as the group with the highest participation rates. The white population saw a slight decline in participation rates among counties in central Arkansas, such as Faulkner and Lonoke. The participation rates for the white population remained relatively lower than the Hispanic population but higher than for the African American population.



Unemployment Rate



The unemployment rate is the proportion of the total adult population (16 years and older) who are unemployed and seeking employment to the total labor force population - adult population who are employed or seeking employment (16 years and older). The unemployment rate captures the unutilized labor resources available in the economy.

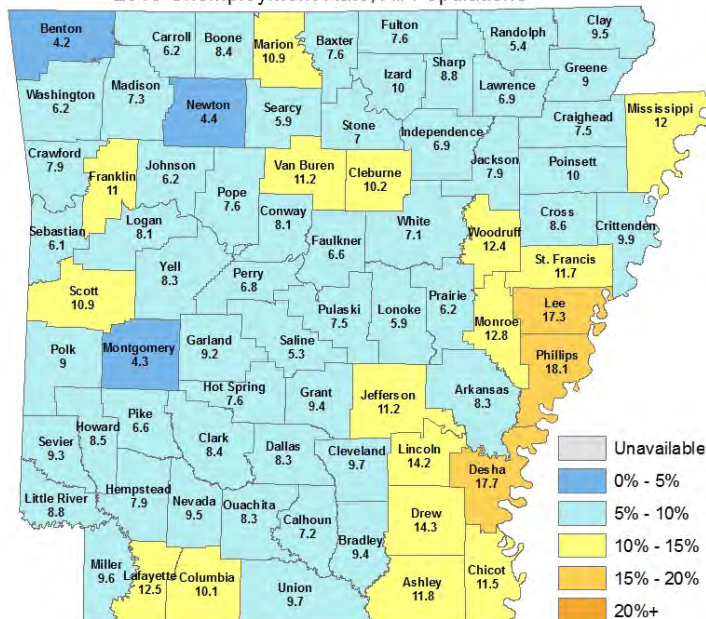
The average unemployment rate in Arkansas was 3.7 percent in 2018.

The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.

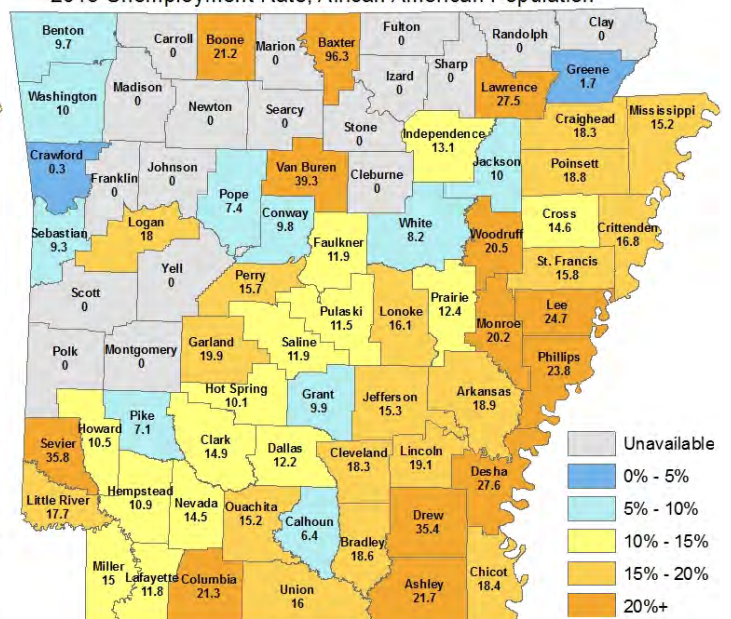
The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas reported relatively lower unemployment rates while the overall unemployment rate across the state declined between 2015 and 2018 with growth in the economy. The unemployment rates for whites were relatively higher than the Hispanic population but relatively lower than the African American population.

Unemployment Rate in 2015

2015 Unemployment Rate, All Populations

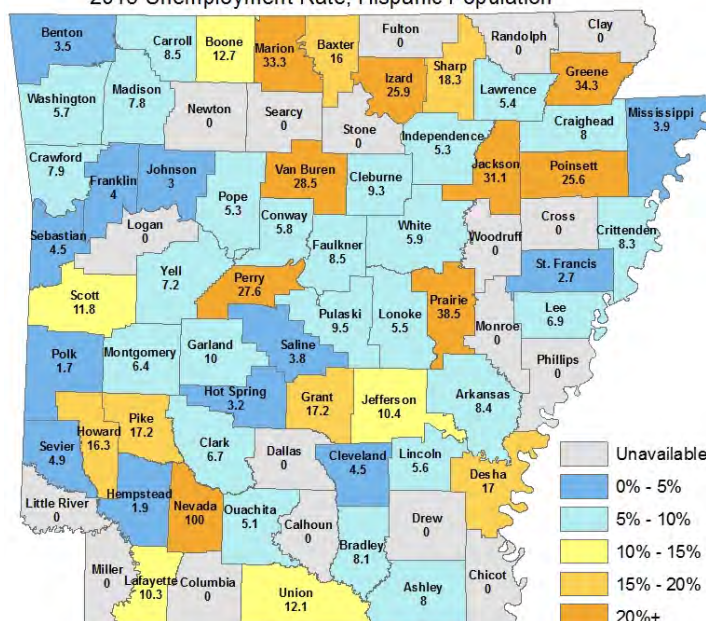


2015 Unemployment Rate, African American Population

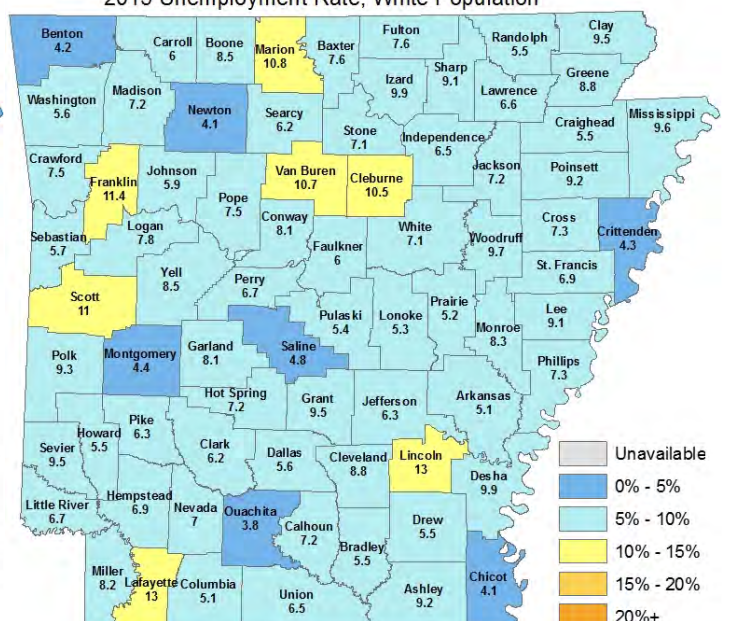


The unemployment rate varied significantly between the different racial and ethnic groups in Arkansas in 2015. The African American population had higher unemployment rates than other groups. Many eastern and southern counties, such as Sevier and Drew, had high unemployment rates. The Hispanic population saw relatively lower unemployment rates but a few counties, such as Greene and Prairie, had high unemployment rates. The white population's unemployment rates were relatively lower than the African American population and no county had very high unemployment rates.

2015 Unemployment Rate, Hispanic Population

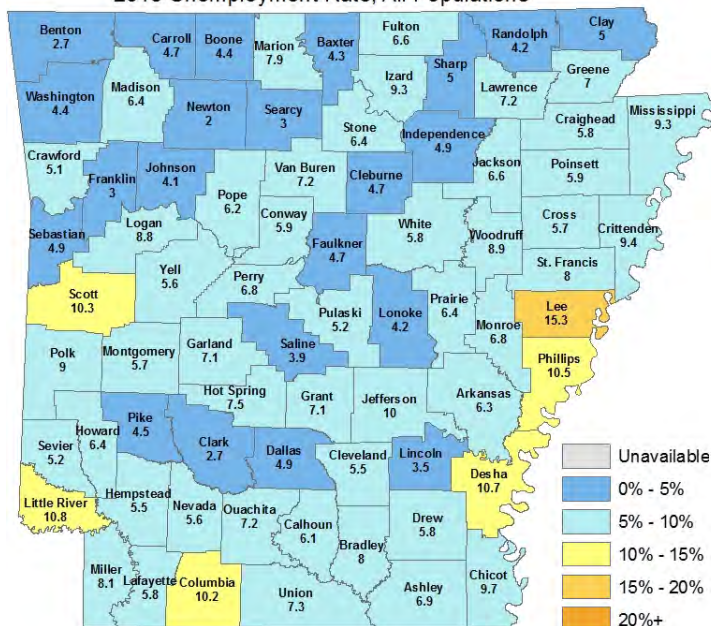


2015 Unemployment Rate, White Population

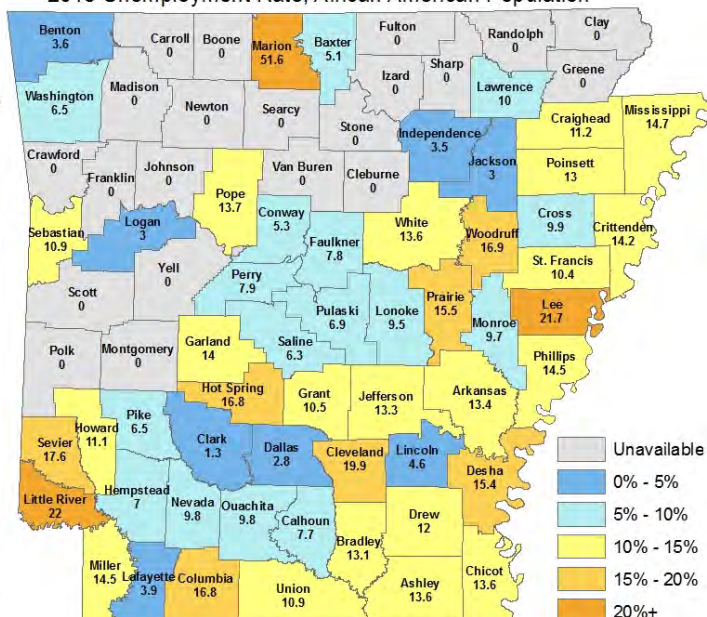


Unemployment Rate in 2018

2018 Unemployment Rate, All Populations

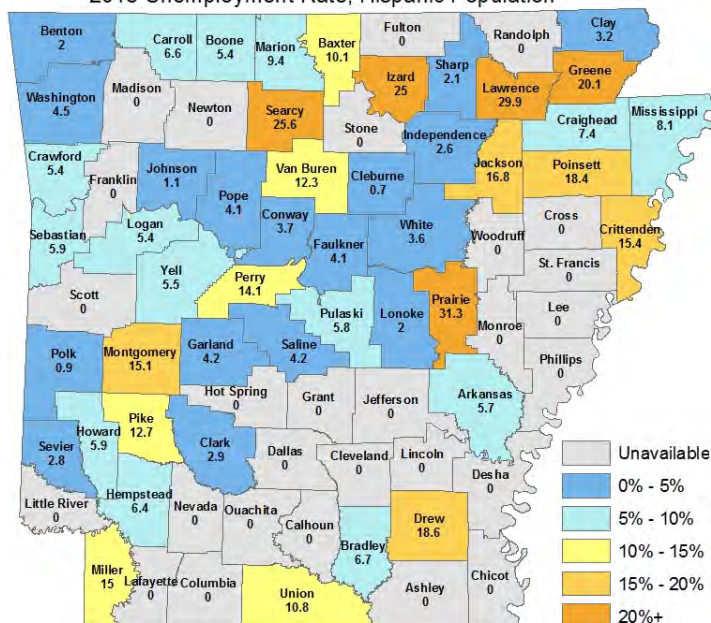


2018 Unemployment Rate, African American Population

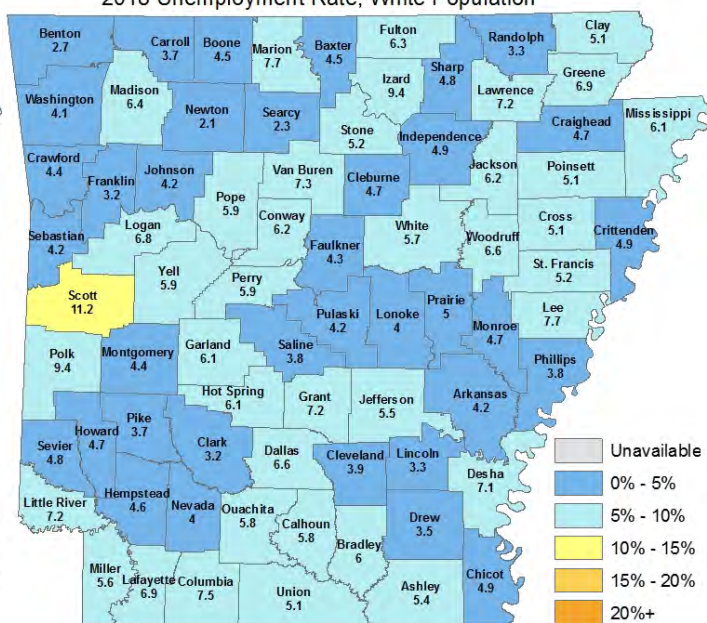


The stronger economy since 2015 meant that the unemployment rate declined for each population group. The general trends seen in 2015 persisted in 2018. The African American population continued to have higher unemployment rates than other groups, but counties such as Baxter, Van Buren, and Drew, saw large declines in their rates. The Hispanic population continued to have relatively low rates of unemployment but a few counties had high rates, such as Prairie, Lawrence, and Searcy. The white unemployment rate decreased across many counties and remained lower than the rates for African Americans.

2018 Unemployment Rate, Hispanic Population



2018 Unemployment Rate, White Population



Educational Attainment

68

**Counties with
increases in
High School
Diploma Attainment
from 2015 to 2018**

59

**Counties with
increases in
Bachelor's Degree
Attainment
from 2015 to 2018**

OVERVIEW

The educational attainment section presents data and maps for the high school diploma attainment rate and the bachelor's degree attainment rate. The two indicators capture important educational credentials which serve as signals of human capital levels and a worker's potential productivity. In addition, the credentials serve as a foundation for further skill development and additional education.



Educational Attainment - High School Diploma



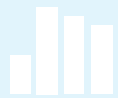
13

Counties in 2018 at or above
the state average for
High School Diploma Attainment



25

Counties in 2018 at or above
the state average for African
American High School Diploma
Attainment



9

Counties in 2018 at or above
the state average for Hispanic
High School Diploma
Attainment



23

Counties in 2018 at or above
the state average for white
High School Diploma
Attainment

Educational attainment is a significant determinant of income and a high school diploma or equivalent diploma (GED) serves as a fundamental building block for further education and/or skill development. The attainment of high school education provides a foundation for further human capital and success in the labor market.

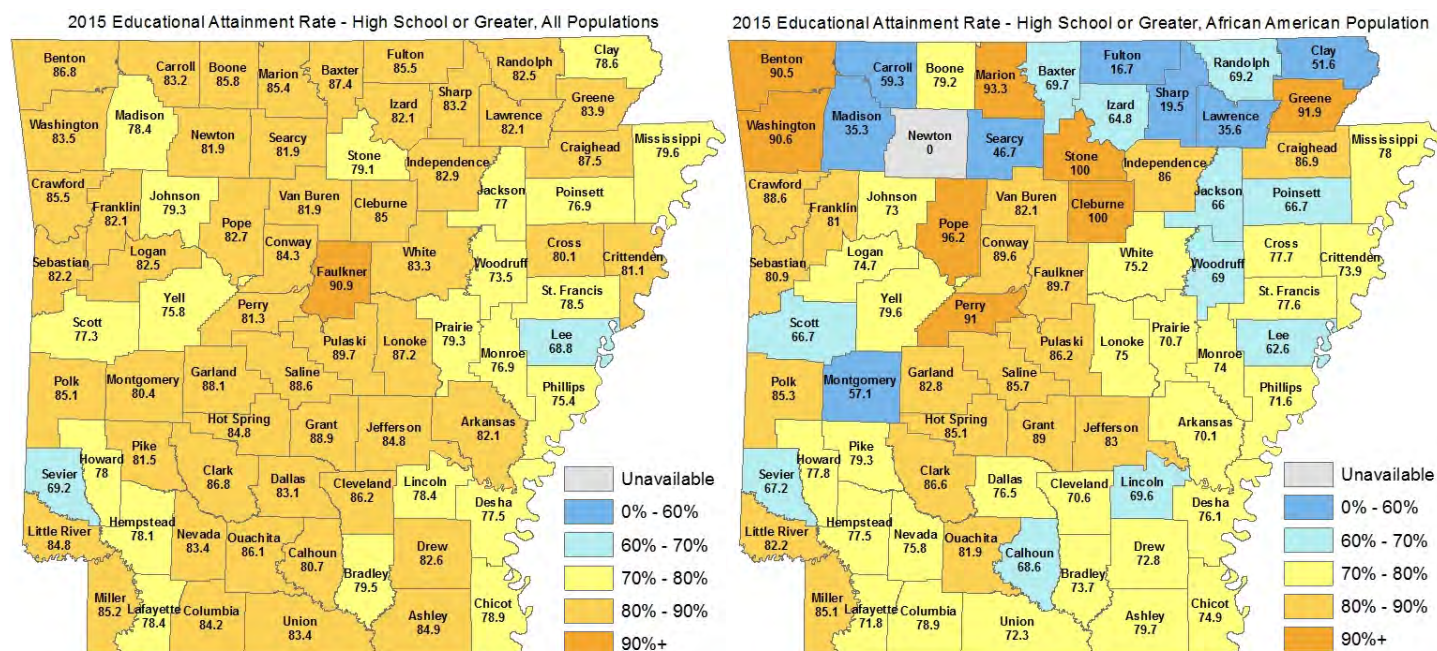
The high school diploma attainment rate is the proportion of the adult population (25 years and older) who have attained at least a high school diploma/GED.

The average high school diploma attainment rate in Arkansas was 87.2 percent in 2018.

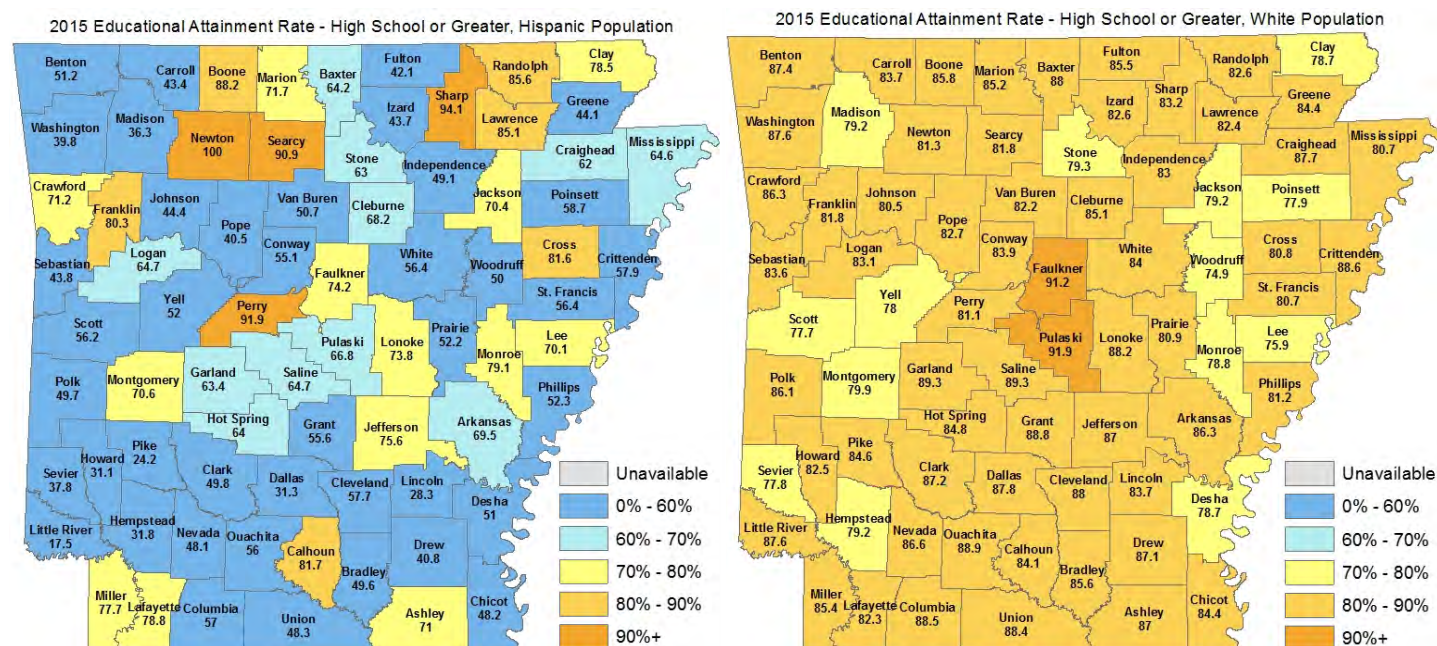
The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The data is reported on a county level and counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.

The high school educational attainment rate increased over the period between 2015 and 2018 in Arkansas. The African American and white populations displayed high attainment rates across most counties of the state. The Hispanic population had significantly lower attainment rates than other groups, although there were several counties which had high attainment rates. In addition, many counties showed improvements in Hispanic high school attainment rates over the period.

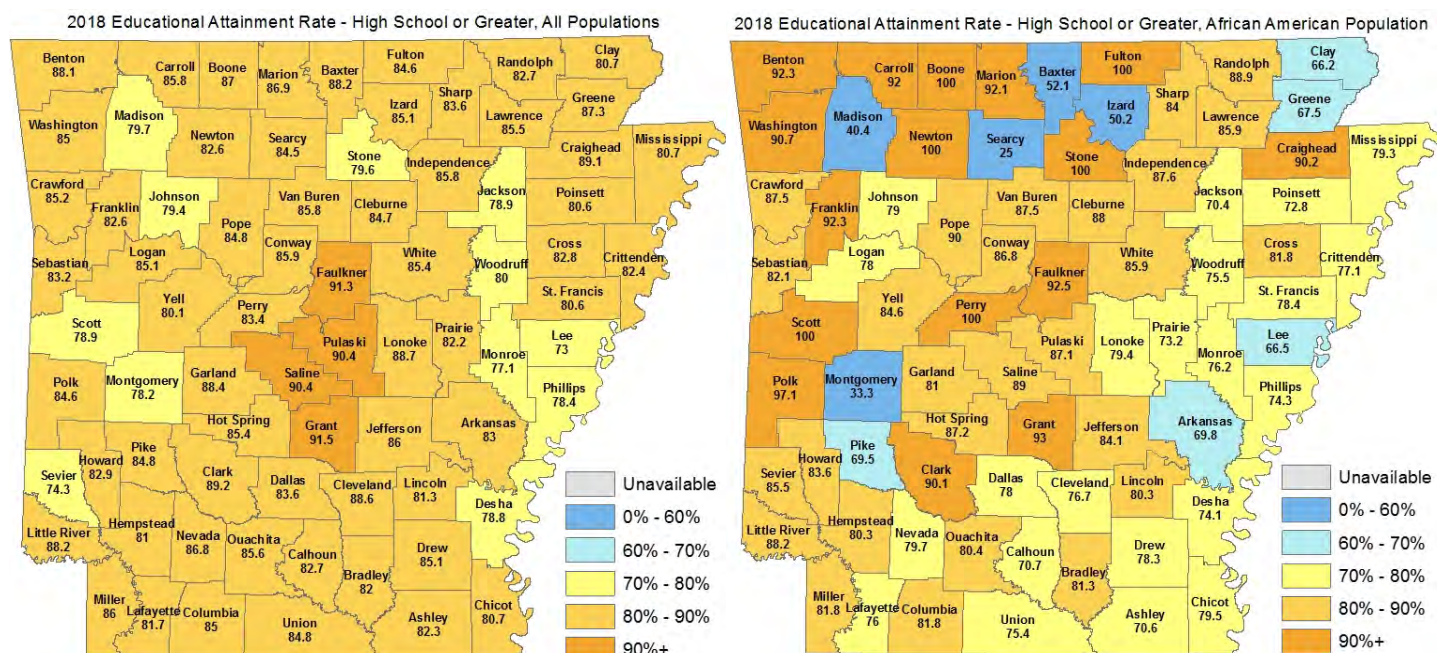
Educational Attainment - High School Diploma - in 2015



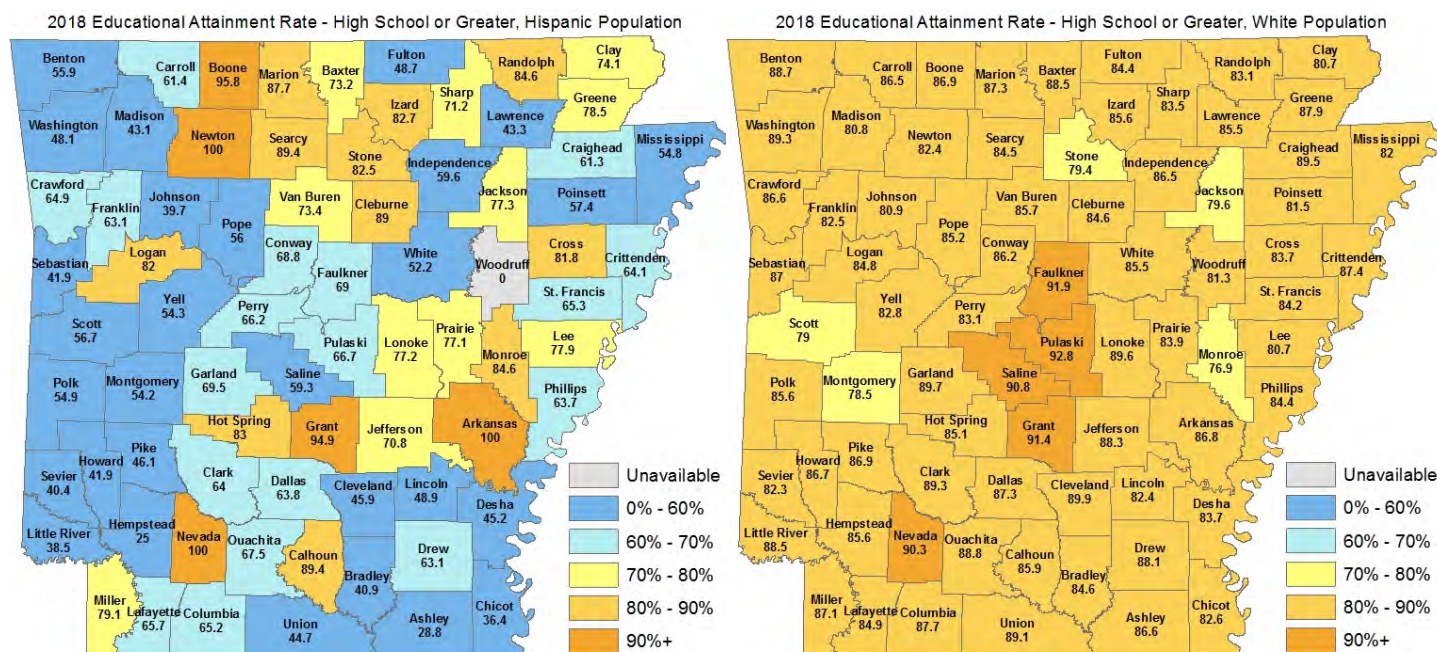
The levels of high school educational attainment, or greater, were generally high for most population groups across Arkansas in 2015. The African American population had slightly lower attainment rates than the state average, 85.4 percent; however, several counties, such as Benton, Greene, and Perry, had higher rates. The Hispanic population had lower attainment rates than the state average but a few counties such as Searcy, Perry, and Sharp reported high attainment rates. The white population's attainment rate was fairly consistent and relatively higher than the African American and Hispanic populations.



Educational Attainment - High School Diploma - in 2018



The high school diploma attainment rates increased for each population group since 2015. The African American population's improvements led to educational attainment rates across many counties which were similar to the state average of 87.2 percent. The Hispanic population's educational attainment rates continued to be lower than the state average but significant progress was achieved in many counties such as Saline, Cleburne, and Grant. The white population maintained its relatively higher attainment rates in comparison to the African American population and especially the Hispanic population.



Educational Attainment - Bachelor's Degree



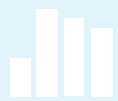
7

Counties in 2018 at or above the state average for Bachelor's Degree Attainment



9

Counties in 2018 at or above the state average for African American Bachelor's Degree Attainment



5

Counties in 2018 at or above the state average for Hispanic Bachelor's Degree Attainment



10

Counties in 2018 at or above the state average for white Bachelor's Degree Attainment

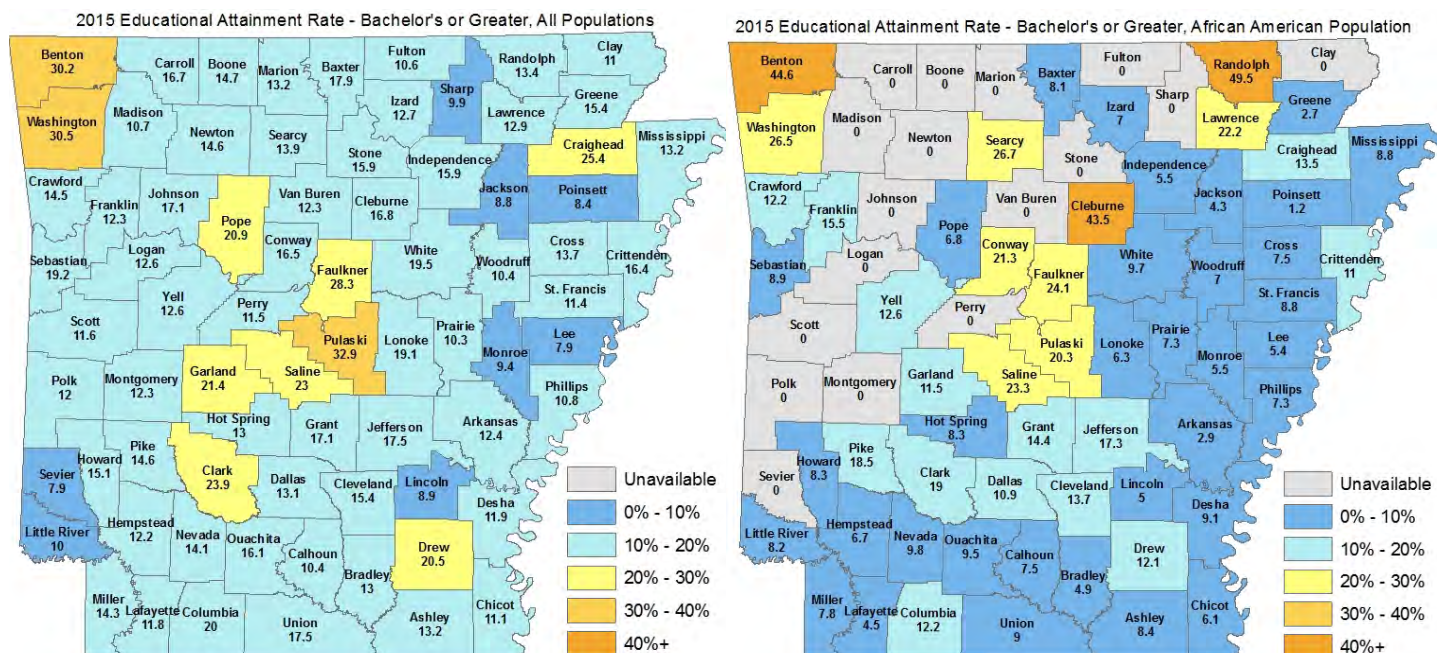
Postsecondary education provides exposure to advanced skill development along with theoretical and applied knowledge. The attainment of a bachelor's degree is associated with increased earnings, enhanced human capital development and greater labor market opportunities. The bachelor's degree attainment rate is the proportion of the adult population (25 years and older) who have attained at least a bachelor's degree.

The average bachelor's degree attainment rate in Arkansas was 23.3 percent in 2018.

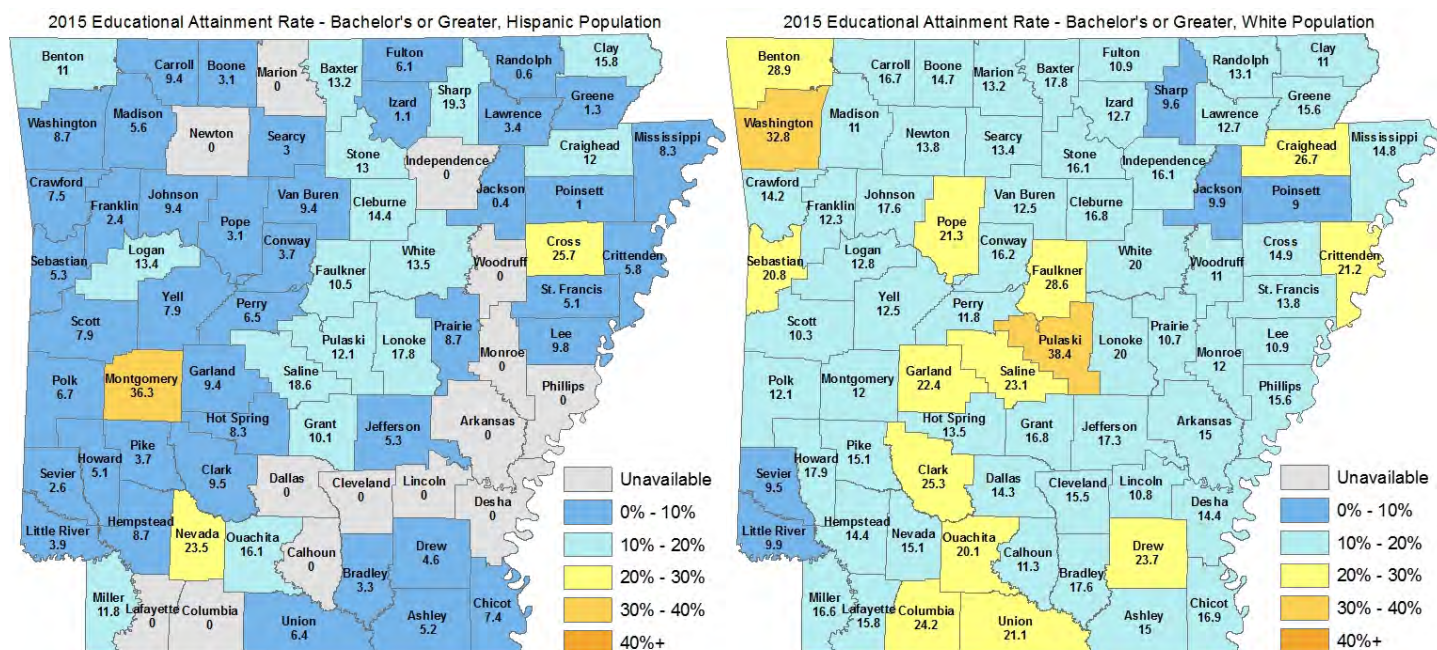
The data contained in this section was retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Counties with data limitations, such as a small population size, will report a zero percent statistic.

Bachelor's degree attainment varied significantly among the various racial and ethnic groups in Arkansas. The higher education attainment rates increased over the period from 2015 to 2018 for each of the different population groups. All population groups displayed greater attainment rates in the Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas metro areas than the rest of Arkansas. The Hispanic and African American attainment rates were generally low across the state compared to the white population.

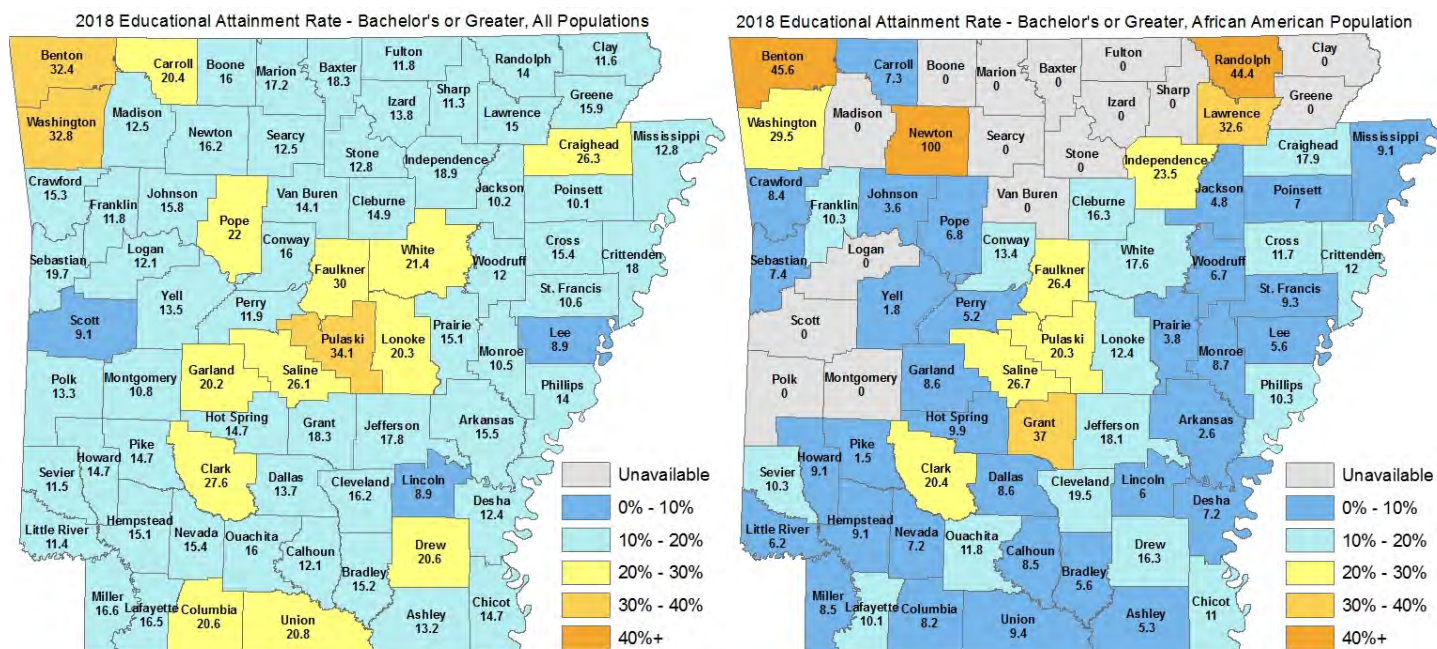
Educational Attainment-Bachelor's Degree or Higher-in 2015



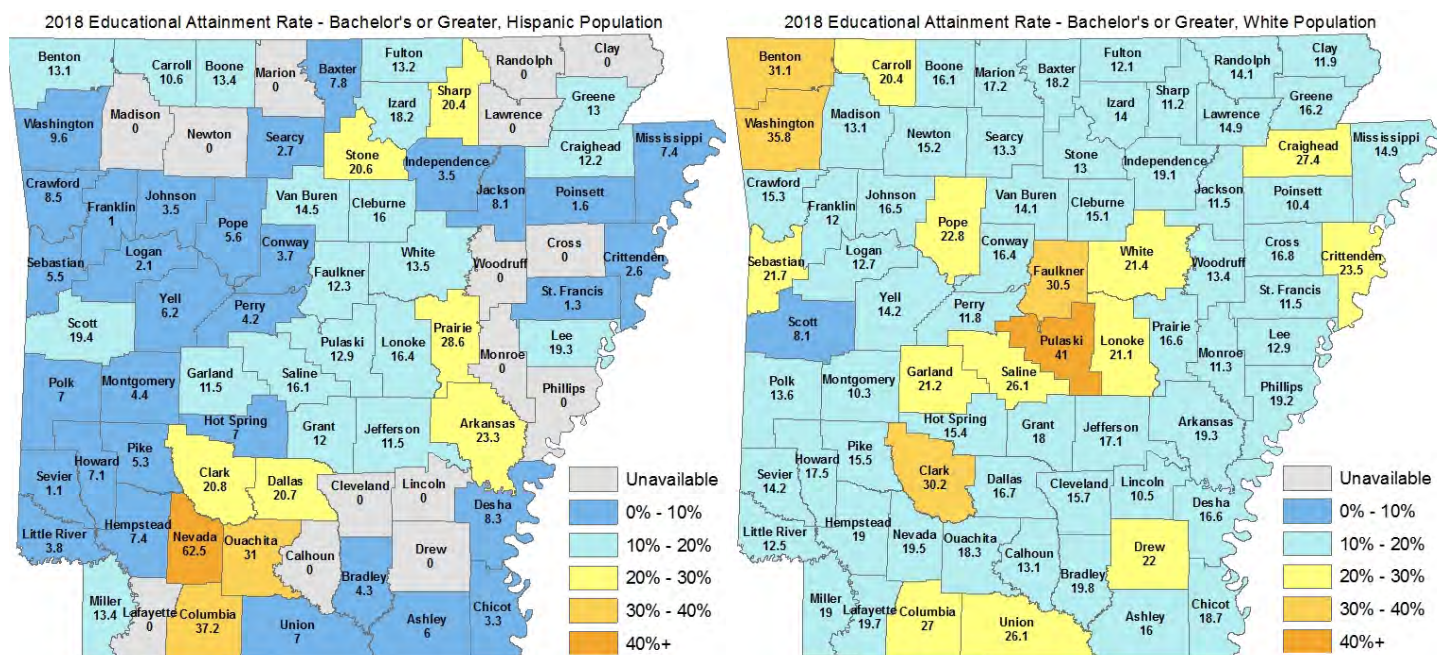
The levels of bachelor's degree attainment, or greater, varied by geographic location and population group in 2015. The metro areas of Northwest Arkansas and Central Arkansas had relatively higher attainment rates than the rest of Arkansas. The African American and Hispanic populations had lower attainment rates than the state average, 21.8 percent. Both populations had many counties with low attainment rates. The white population's educational attainment rates were relatively higher than those among the African American and Hispanic populations.



Educational Attainment-Bachelor's Degree or Higher-in 2018



The educational attainment rates increased from 2015 to 2018 for each population, although the trends from 2015 showed little change in 2018. The African American, Hispanic, and white populations experienced increases in their attainment rates across 34, 36, and 58 counties, respectively. The African American and Hispanic populations continued to have lower educational attainment rates than the state average, 23.3 percent. The white population once again reported educational attainment rates which were relatively higher than the rates among the African American and Hispanic populations.



The Center for Business and Economic Research at the Sam M. Walton College of Business provides excellence in applied economic and business research to federal, state, and local government, as well as to businesses currently operating or those that desire to operate in the state of Arkansas. The Center further works to improve the economic opportunities of all Arkansans by conducting policy research in the public interest.

The Urban League of the State of Arkansas is structured to lead efforts in advancing and obtaining equal opportunities for all citizens with a concerted focus on the areas of Health, Education, Jobs and Housing. As an affiliate of the National Urban League, Arkansas will sustain the mission of the Urban League movement by conducting its business consistent with the requirements, policies, and standards of the National Urban League.

Photo credits: Rob Smith/Northwest Arkansas Council, Ryan Versey/Sam M. Walton College of Business.

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