



Across America, Differences in How Long and How Well We Live

Where we live, work, learn and play dramatically affects our health—for better or for worse. The economic, social and physical environments that surround us are shaped by underlying differences in opportunities and resources and affect our ability to live healthier, longer lives.

The average life expectancy for people living in Bennett County, S.D., is 66.6 years. Just next door, people living in Sioux County, Iowa, can expect to live nearly 15 years longer.



Within States, Large Gaps in Life Expectancy

There are dramatic differences in life expectancy even within a single state, reflecting underlying differences in the opportunities and resources that people have to be healthy. This chart shows the highest and lowest life expectancy rates (based on county-level data) found in each state and the District of Columbia. For example, based on where they live, some people in the state of South Dakota can expect to live nearly 14 years longer than others.

States	Highest Life Expectancy	Lowest Life Expectancy	Difference in Life Expectancy
Alabama	76.8	71.7	5.1
Alaska	76.9*	76.9*	N/A
Arizona	80.9	73.9	7.0
Arkansas	78.0	69.8	8.2
California	80.8	73.8	7.0
Colorado	81.3	74.8	6.5
Connecticut	79.2	76.8	2.4
Delaware	76.5	75.8	0.7
District of Columbia	72.0	72.0	N/A
Florida	81.0	70.2	10.8
Georgia	78.9	72.2	6.7
Hawaii	80.5	77.3	3.2
Idaho	80.8	74.9	5.9
Illinois	79.6	74.3	5.3
Indiana	79.1	73.5	5.6
Iowa	81.3	76.1	5.2
Kansas	80.3	73.2	7.1
Kentucky	77.4	72.0	5.4
Louisiana	76.7	71.6	5.1
Maine	78.8	75.6	3.2
Maryland	81.3	68.6	12.7
Massachusetts	79.5	76.5	3.0
Michigan	80.2	73.4	6.8
Minnesota	81.1	76.2	4.9
Mississippi	76.1	70.1	6.0
Missouri	79.3	70.8	8.5

States	Highest Life Expectancy	Lowest Life Expectancy	Difference in Life Expectancy
Montana	79.3	72.8	6.5
Nebraska	80.1	76.4	3.7
Nevada	79.8	74.5	5.3
New Hampshire	78.7	76.2	2.5
New Jersey	79.9	74.7	5.2
New Mexico	79.6	74.2	5.4
New York	79.5	75.0	4.5
North Carolina	78.6	71.2	7.4
North Dakota	80.0	76.3	3.7
Ohio	79.7	73.4	6.3
Oklahoma	77.9	72.0	5.9
Oregon	80.9	75.5	5.4
Pennsylvania	79.4	72.3	7.1
Rhode Island	79.5	77.5	2.0
South Carolina	78.9	69.6	9.3
South Dakota	80.3	66.6	13.7
Tennessee	78.8	72.4	6.4
Texas	80.2	72.0	8.2
Utah	80.8	76.3	4.5
Vermont	79.0	76.9	2.1
Virginia	80.9	69.6	11.3
Washington	80.3	74.9	5.4
West Virginia	77.2	70.4	6.8
Wisconsin	80.1	75.7	4.4
Wyoming	78.2	73.9	4.3

*Due to multiple changes in county/census divisions, life expectancy for Alaska was estimated as a single figure, assigned to all counties in the state.

Source: Murray CJ, Kulkarni SC, Michaud C, et al. "Eight Americas: Investigating Mortality Disparities Across Races, Counties, and Race-Counties in the United States." Public Library of Science, 3(9): e260, 2006.