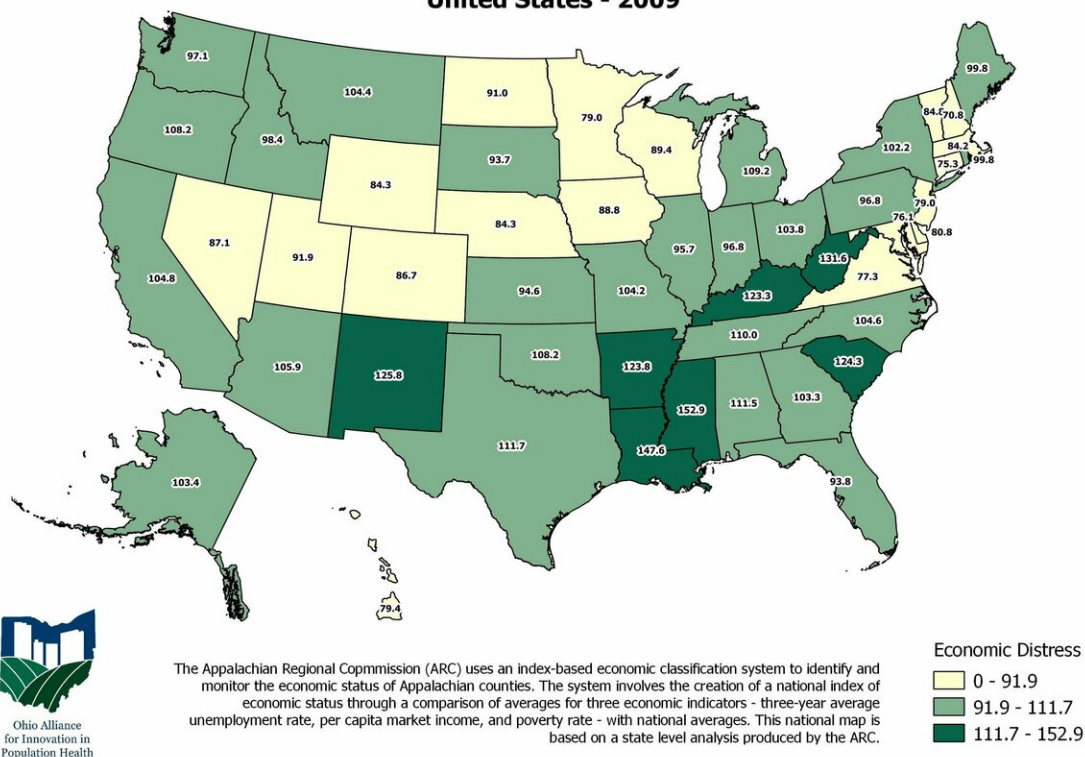


Study ranks performance of each state's economy over the past decade

February 5 2019

Figure 1
Economic Distress Scores for
United States - 2009



The Appalachian Regional Commission uses an index-based economic classification system, which involves the creation of a national index of economic status through a comparison of three economic indicators. Credit: Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health

A nationwide study on economic distress was recently released by the Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health ranking the economic performance of all 50 states in the country from 2009 to 2019. While the economy in New Hampshire has remained the healthiest in the United States over the past decade and Mississippi has continued to be the most economically distressed state over that same time span, that doesn't tell the whole story.

For example, although the economy in New Hampshire improved and allowed the state to stay in the No. 1 position, other states near or at the bottom of the list, such as Mississippi, also improved. New Hampshire had an [economic distress](#) index score of 70.8 in 2009 that improved to 68.8 in 2019 (a lower number represents a healthier economy) and Mississippi had a score of 153 in 2009 that improved to 141.8 in 2019.

According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Mississippi saw increases across the board in nearly every income-related category from 2009 to 2017 (the most recent year available) but also experienced increased total unemployment.

Orman Hall, an executive in residence for Ohio University's College of Health Sciences and Professions and the Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health (Alliance), conducted the nationwide study based on information compiled by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for 2009 and 2019. Economic distress, as measured by ARC, is determined by unemployment rate, per capita market income and poverty rate averaged over three years and compared to national averages.

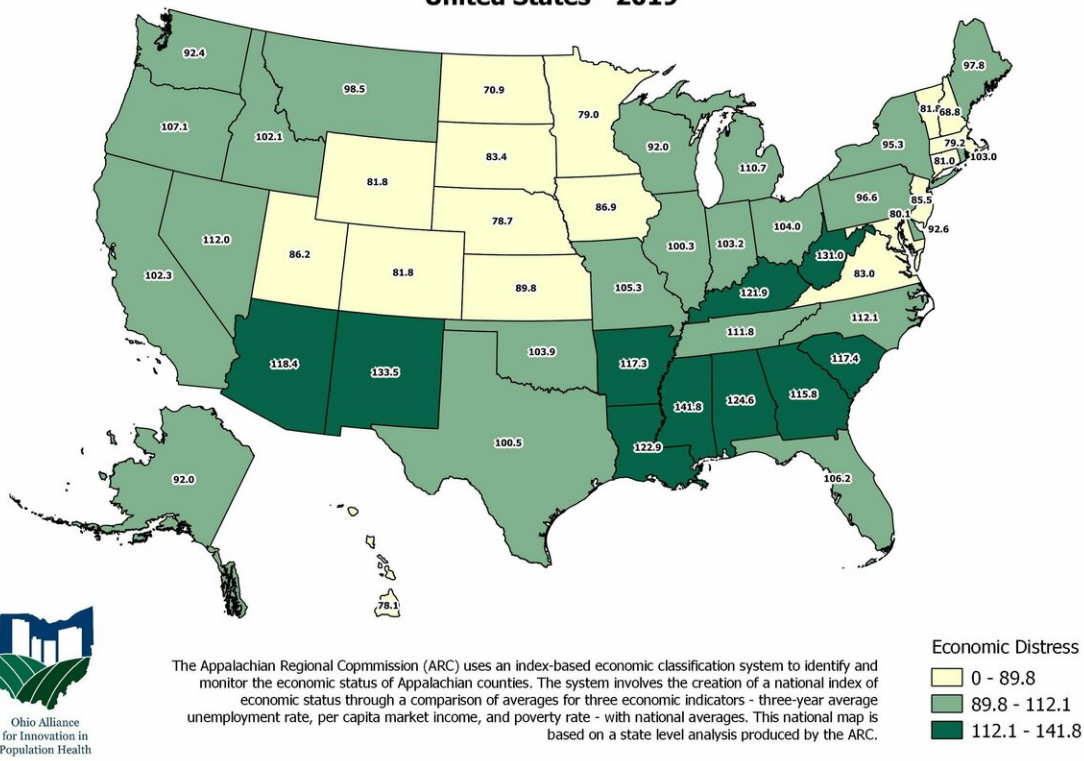
Hall expressed appreciation to the ARC for its long-standing work in monitoring economic distress.

"These measures can help elected officials and policy makers identify

communities that may be susceptible to elevated levels of mental illness, substance abuse and other serious diseases of despair," Hall said.

North Dakota had the greatest improvement in economy, leaping from 17th with a score of 91 in 2009 to second in 2019 at 71. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Nevada worsened from 14th to 39th.

Figure 2
Economic Distress Scores for
United States - 2019



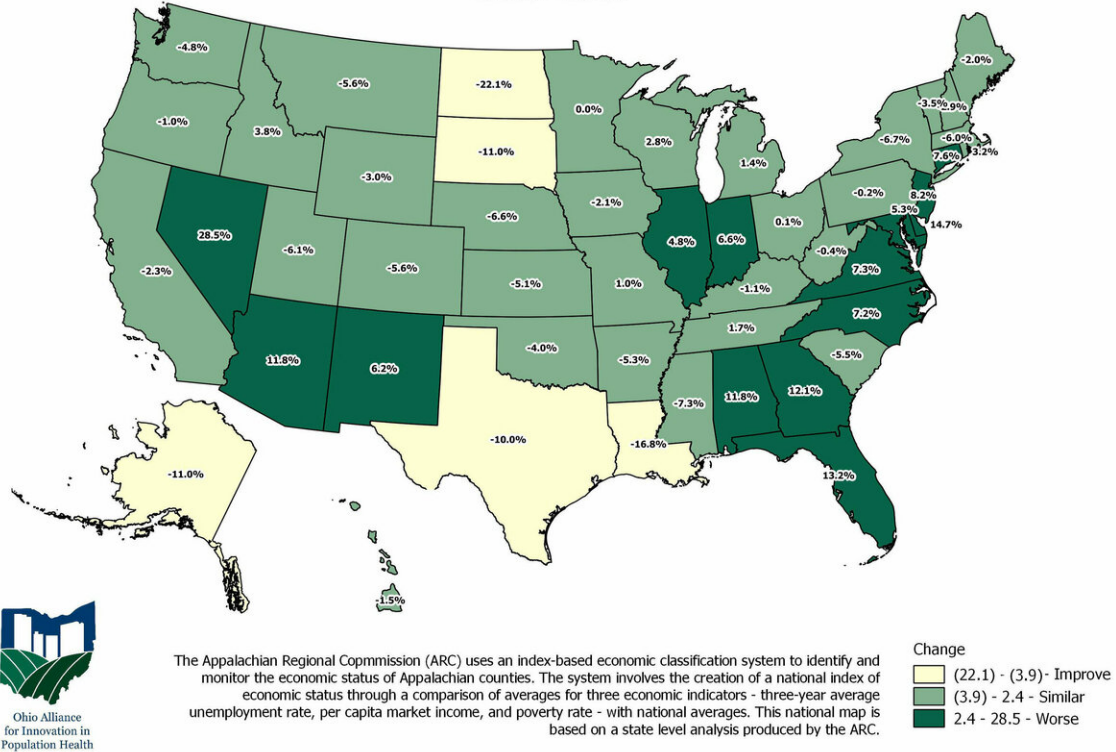
The Appalachian Regional Commission uses an index-based economic classification system, which involves the creation of a national index of economic status through a comparison of three economic indicators. Credit: Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Public Health

The top 10 states in terms of healthiest economies for 2019 include:

1. New Hampshire
2. North Dakota
3. Hawaii
4. Nebraska
5. Minnesota
6. Massachusetts
7. Maryland
8. Connecticut
9. Vermont
10. Wyoming

The most economically distressed states for 2019 are: Mississippi, New Mexico, West Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, Arizona, South Carolina, Arkansas and Georgia. "This research provides a valuable benchmark for discerning the relative state of economic distress in counties and states across the nation. The data is valuable on its face, but it will also allow us to map many issues as they relate to economic status," said Rick Hodges, director of the Alliance. "I am in the health field and I look forward to overlaying various diseases to determine the relationship between economic distress and health but this study will also be applicable to issues beyond health."

Figure 3
Change in Economic Distress Scores for
2009 - 2019



The Appalachian Regional Commission uses an index-based economic classification system, which involves the creation of a national index of economic status through a comparison of three economic indicators. Credit: Ohio Alliance for Innovation in Population Health

Ohio, the home state of the study, stayed virtually the same, dropping by 0.2 and falling from the 32nd healthiest economy in the nation to 33rd. The study also showed that if the Appalachian counties of Ohio were combined into a separate state, it would be the second-most economically distressed state in the country. However, those Appalachian regions have more overall improvement to the [economy](#)

than the rest of the state on a per capita basis.

"As a leader in promoting economic restructuring and prosperity across Appalachia, I am pleased to see the progress from Ohio's Appalachian counties, though the numbers reflect more work must be done," said Jennifer Simon, executive director for Ohio University Regional Innovation. "In my 25 years of working on community and economic development here, Appalachia typically comes out of recessions last and goes into recessions first as compared to the rest of the state and country. During this recovery, we witnessed changes from people having jobs to people creating jobs. We also work in Kentucky and West Virginia and would love to see the numbers actually reflect that changing narrative around economic sectors of success in those communities."

Provided by Ohio University

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