



**An in-depth record of
important social statistics
affecting the well-being of
families in Louisiana**



STATE OF LOUISIANA Cultural Indicators



LOUISIANA FAMILY FORUM

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Foreword



Gene Mills
President
Louisiana Family Forum

In 1994, William J. Bennett, a former Cabinet official for Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, published the *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators (ILCI)*. This was the first time such a report had been published, and Bennett developed ILCI because he believed social and cultural trends warranted monitoring by public policy officials just as carefully as fiscal trends were being tracked in the Index of Leading Economic Indicators.

A national conversation ensued regarding Bennett's Indicators, and numerous national think-tanks and state policy organizations have since replicated state level findings and proposed issue-specific policy designed to remedy problems identified in the ILCI report.

For this first ever edition of a *Louisiana Cultural Indicators Report (LCIR)*, we have chosen to include major social and fiscal trends that directly impact Louisiana families.

In your review of LCIR, you will find the empirical evidence is conclusive. Whether your views are traditional, libertarian, secular, religious, Democratic, Republican, or Independent, all should agree broken man-woman marriages, particularly those with children involved, lead to social maladies that are detrimental to our society. Strong marriages produce strong families, which are essential to the success of Louisiana's

economic and social future. Strong families lessen the need for government's safety net by alleviating the financial burden caused by the fragmentation and breakdown of the family.

Despite the obstacles before us, LFF finds encouragement in the fact that each problem can be alleviated through the strengthening of man-woman marriages.

Finally, Louisiana Family Forum ("LFF") is committed to working with you, public officials, churches, and non-profit organizations in preserving and advancing a culture where families and liberty thrive.

This document is your invitation to engage the conversation and propose solutions that will encourage all families to thrive. These benchmarks will provide a measure for elected officials and concerned citizens in charting a course toward those solutions. You will find LFF's policy recommendations on page "v," which may serve as the starting point for these conversations.

Thank you for your kind attention to this report and service to Louisiana families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gene Mills', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Executive Summary

State of Louisiana Cultural Indicators

Louisiana Family Forum is pleased to present the *State of Louisiana Cultural Indicators*. This study tracks various Louisiana-specific and national measures of societal well-being dating back to 1960, as statistics are available. Chapters are devoted to vital statistics, family, crime, education, health, poverty and welfare, and business and government. Some highlights of the study include:

Vital Statistics

- From 1960 to 2013, Louisiana's population increased 47% while the total population for the U.S. increased 76%.
- Since 1960, Louisiana's birthrate has fallen over 50% to 13.7 per 1,000 persons, still well above the State's death rate of 9.2 per 1,000 persons.
- In Louisiana, 93% of teen births in 2012 occurred out of wedlock. In 1960, only 19% of teen births were out of wedlock.

Family

- Although Louisiana state law requires the complete collection of divorce data every year, in most years the data are incomplete, making them unusable for identifying trends in divorce.
- In Louisiana, just 36% of teens are growing up with both biological parents who are married to each other. Among black teens, a mere 16% are growing up with intact families.
- Since 1960, the percentage of families headed by a single parent in Louisiana has increased by 315%.

Education

- Since 1990, Louisiana students' scores on the "Enhanced ACT" have been stagnant, with students typically scoring between 19 and 20.
- Sources differ on the exact average amount spent per Louisiana pupil, but do reveal that Louisiana spending per pupil closely follows the national average of \$11,355.
- One-fourth of Louisiana K-12 students exercised some form of education choice in 2014 (13% private school, 7.5% charter school, 2.5% home education, and 2% course choice).

Poverty

- In 2013, about one in every seven Louisiana households with children was in poverty.
- Married couples have by far the lowest poverty rate (8.5%) of all household types.
- In 2014, about one in every five people in Louisiana received some form of food stamp support.

Crime

- Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the nation.
- There were 23,609 violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) reported in Louisiana in 2013.
- Over 10,000 offenders in Louisiana are serving terms of greater than 20 years, life, or have a death sentence.

Health

- Inflation-adjusted spending in Louisiana on Medicaid has increased five-fold since 1980.
- The percentage of Louisiana's population enrolled in Medicare has doubled since 1965, a pace greater than the national average.
- In 2013, Louisiana had the highest rate of reported cases of gonorrhea in the nation, second highest rate of chlamydia in the nation, and third highest rate of syphilis in the nation. Louisiana had the third highest rate of HIV infection in 2012.

Government

- In November 2014, Louisiana had a total of 302,000 state and local government workers (approximately 30% were state employees and 70% were local employees).

- In fiscal year 2014, Louisiana's combined state and local expenditures totaled \$48.1 billion, almost 20% of the state's GDP.
- The three largest components of Louisiana's state and local budgets in 2014 were education (30%), health care (22%), and public safety and corrections (8%).

Business

- With the exception of the dramatic crude oil price in the mid-1980s and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, unemployment in Louisiana has followed the U.S. unemployment rate.
- Between November 2013 and November 2014, preliminary data show Louisiana gained 59,000 jobs, for a total of 2.04 million jobs.
- Since 1991, gamblers have wagered and lost more than \$54 billion in gambling venues across the state, though it is uncertain how much of that amount was lost by the people of Louisiana.

What's Next?

Louisiana Family Forum's Initial Recommendations

1 Begin a statewide conversation that crosses party, race, ideology and region. The common belief of such a dialogue would be that the family is the foundation of society. “As goes the family, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.” LFF and other statewide groups have initiated conversations, but the dialogue must be expanded.

2 Reduce poverty and crime by promoting marriage as desirable and special. One of the greatest weapons for fighting poverty is marriage; married couples have by far the lowest poverty rate of all households. Large volumes of research show that married couples are happier, healthier and more financially secure.

In large part, our high crime rates are a result of the breakdown of the family and specifically are the result of the father's absence in the home. A thriving marriage culture in Louisiana will reduce our high crime and high incarceration rates. Studies have shown that the children raised by their parents in a two-parent home are less likely to live in poverty, commit crime, drop out of school, or end up in prison.

3 Keep track of divorce. Louisiana law requires that each Clerk of Court report all divorces and marriage annulments to the state registrar.¹ **La. R.S. §40:58 provides that for each divorce or annulment report, the applicable Clerk of Court shall receive a fee, and this fee “shall be included and collected as court costs for the divorce or annulment.” La. R.S. §40:61(B) even provides a penalty provision for those who willfully and knowingly fail to report this information.** Despite these mandatory requirements, Louisiana only has incomplete data to show for divorce. We need to make sure these records are reported and tracked because divorce is an early warning sign of poverty and crime to come. Accurate divorce statistics will give Louisiana an exact measuring stick and will provide a continual motivation to help promote healthy, natural marriages that go the distance.

4 Resist divorce as inevitable. The initial shock of separation need not lead to dissolution, especially when children are involved. The effects of divorce on children are lifelong. Do our state laws encourage reconciliation (like Parental

Divorce Reduction acts), or do they encourage quick and unilateral divorce with “no fault”? *We must move toward the former and away from the latter.*

5 Continue to teach age-appropriate abstinence education.

The simplest way to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS is sexual abstinence until marriage and fidelity in the marriage. Age-appropriate curricula will be accurate, promoting a positive view of sexuality in the appropriate context of marriage. Virginity should be looked at as honorable, while sexual infidelity and the disastrous consequences accompanying it should be strongly discouraged.

6 Recognize the fiscal-moral connection.

A 2008 study conducted by the Institute for American Values showed that broken families cost taxpayers and our state government at least \$670 million per year.² There is virtually no state domestic policy issue which is not directly affected by the strength and/or weakness of marriage and family structures.

7 Build on faith communities.

People of faith, loosely defined, can contribute greatly to the conversation about family. Unfortunately, Sunday morning continues to be the most segregated time of the week, but according to the Pew Research Center, Louisianans have a stronger, more active faith than citizens in many other states. From city streets to country crossroads, Louisiana is home to thousands of vibrant churches that could be agents of change if we work together.

¹ La. R.S. §40:57, §40:58, and §40:61(B).

² <http://www.americanvalues.org/search/item.php?id=52>

Contents

Clicking on a page title will redirect
you to the chosen page.

Using the “bookmarks” pane or
“page thumbnails” in Acrobat Reader
is also recommended for
ease of navigation.



■ Vital Statistics

- Population | 1
- Birth Rates | 2
- Death Rates | 3
- Infant Mortality | 4
- Teen Births | 5
- Teen Pregnancies | 6

■ Family

- Marriage | 7
- Divorce | 8
- The Index of Belonging and Rejection | 9
- Births to Unwed Mothers | 10
- Abortion Rates | 11
- Single-Parent Families | 12
- Foster Care | 13
- Adoption | 14

■ Education

- Academic Achievement | 15
- ACT Scores | 16-17
- SAT Scores | 18
- NAEP Scores | 19-20
- K-12 Spending Per Pupil | 21
- Education Choice in Louisiana | 22

■ Poverty and Welfare

- Median Household Income | 23
- Adequate Housing | 24
- Families in Poverty | 25-26
- Food Stamps | 27
- SSI Benefits | 28

- School Lunches | 29
- SCHIP/CHIP Benefits | 30

■ Crime

- Crime Rates | 31
- Violent Crime | 32
- Property Crime | 33
- Hate Crimes | 34
- Prison Population | 35
- Cost of Imprisonment | 36
- Child Abuse | 37
- Human Trafficking | 38

■ Health

- Medicaid Benefits | 39
- Medicare | 40
- Viral Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs) | 41
- Bacterial Sexually-Transmitted Diseases (STDs) | 42
- HIV / AIDS | 43

■ Business and Government

- State and Local Budgets | 44
- State and Local Employees | 45
- Unemployment | 46
- Gambling Dollars Wagered and Revenue to State | 47

References | 48

Points to Consider | 56

Louisiana Family Forum's Core Values | 60

Population

12th

From 1960 to 2013, Louisiana's population increased 47%, from 3,260,000 to 4,625,470, making it the 25th largest state in the Union.² At the same time, the population of the entire United States increased 76%, from 179.3 million to 316 million.³ The sudden dip in Louisiana's population in 2005 was due in large part to the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

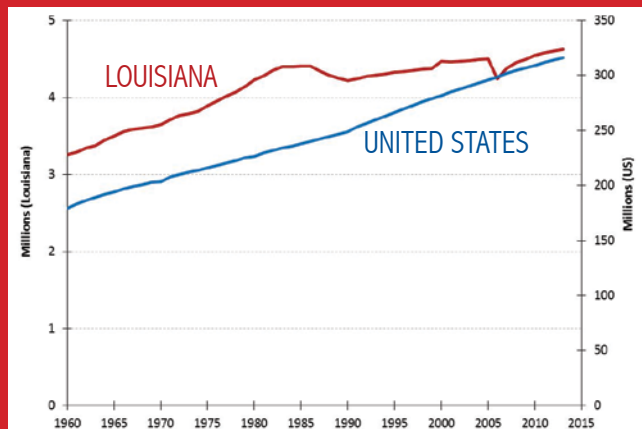
In 2013, the largest age group in Louisiana was 20-29 years old (14.9% of the population), followed by the 50-59 age group (13.8%), those less than 10 years old (13.4%), and those between 10-19 years of age (13.2%).⁴

In 2013, Louisiana's population composition was about 64% white (3.0 million), 33% black (1.5 million), and 2% Asian (96,300). Hispanics of any ethnicity comprised 5% (226,000) of the states' population.⁵

After accounting for births and deaths, approximately one-fourth of the population growth in Louisiana from 2010 to 2013 was the result of international migration.⁶ The largest age groups of those migrating from abroad in 2013 were 5-17 years old (18%) and 25-34 years old (14%). Most were either white (63%) or black (32%), with only 5% of any ethnicity from Hispanic descent.⁷

As of 2010, Louisiana's population density of 105 persons per square mile is 20% greater than the national average (87.4 persons per square mile).⁸

Population



Birth Rates

11%

In 2012—the most recent year complete data are available—11% of births in Louisiana were low-weight births (birth weights of less than 2,500 grams / 5 pounds, 8 ounces). In 2012, Louisiana had the **second-highest ranking in low-weight births** in the nation.¹¹

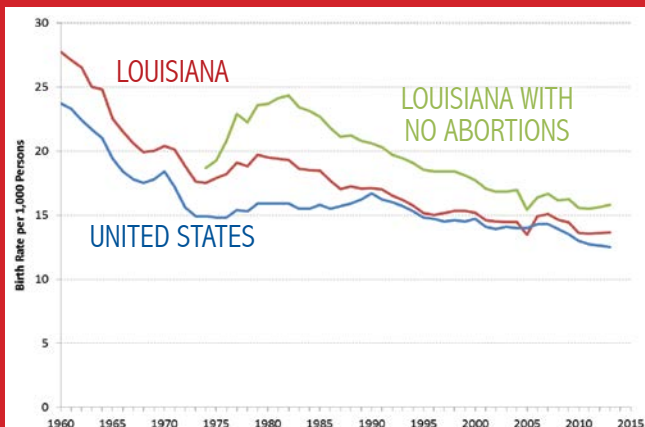


Since 1960, Louisiana's birth rate has **fallen** from 27.7 per 1,000 persons in 1960 to 13.7 per 1,000 in 2013, **a drop of 51%**. Nationally, the birth rate fell from 23.7 per 1,000 persons in 1960 to 12.5 in 2012, a decline of 47%.⁹

In 2013, there were 63,138 live births in Louisiana. Fifty-three percent of these were to white mothers (33,545), while 38% (24,012) were to blacks and 9% (5,778) were to other people groups. The resident birth rate for whites was 11.2 births per 1,000 population, 15.6 births blacks, and 11.5 for other people groups.¹⁰

The green line on the birth rate chart suggests what Louisiana's birth rate would have been had no abortions been performed in the state since the passage of *Roe v. Wade*. According to this estimate, an additional 521,000 children would have been born in Louisiana since 1973, raising the birth rate by an average of 3 births per 1,000 population for the past 40 years. **Had Louisiana had no abortions in 2013, it would have had the second highest birth rate in the nation.**¹²

Birth Rates (per 1000 persons)



[SNAPSHOT]

Since 1960, Louisiana's birth rate fell at a rate greater than the national average. If no abortions had been performed in Louisiana since the passage of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, Louisiana would have had the second highest birth rate in the country.

Death Rates



In 2012, there were 42,320 deaths in **LOUISIANA**, for an average death rate of **9.2 persons per 1,000 population**. Since 1960, Louisiana's death rate has **increased 1%**.



From 1960 to 2012, the **NATIONAL** death rate has **fallen 15%**, from 9.5 to 8.1 persons per 1,000 population.¹³



[SNAPSHOT] Louisiana's death rate slightly increased since 1960 while the national death rate declined significantly. After adjusting for age, Louisiana's death rate is 20% above the national average.

Heart disease is the primary cause of death in both Louisiana and the nation as a whole. In 2012, Louisiana's death rate from heart disease was 2.2 per 1,000 population, about 14% higher than the national average (1.9).¹⁴

The second leading cause of death in Louisiana and the United States **is cancer**. In 2012, Louisiana's death rate from cancer was 2.0 per 1,000 population, which was seven percent higher than the national average (1.9).¹⁵

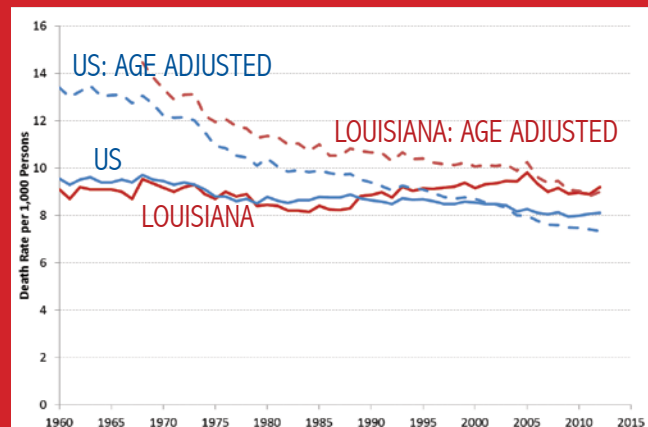
Age-adjusting a rate is a way to make fairer comparisons between groups with different age distributions. For example, a parish having a higher percentage of

elderly people may have a higher rate of death or hospitalization than a parish with a younger population, merely because the elderly are more likely to die or be hospitalized. The same distortion can happen when comparisons are made between demographics or time periods. Age adjustment can make the different groups more comparable.¹⁶

When the death rates for Louisiana and the nation as a whole are age-adjusted, Louisiana's death rate in 2012 increased slightly to 9.6 per 1,000 population, while the national rate dropped to 8.0.¹⁷

When age-adjusted death rates are compared, blacks in Louisiana died at a higher rate (10.1) than whites (8.6).¹⁸

Death Rates (per 1000 persons)

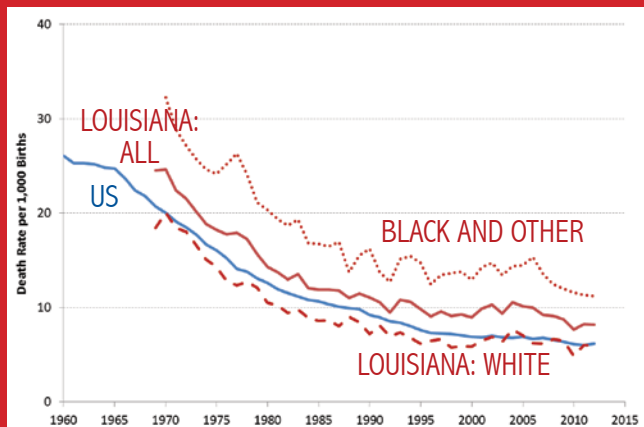


Infant Mortality

In 2012, the top four leading causes of infant deaths in Louisiana were: perinatal period conditions (109); congenital malformations (92); accidents (45); and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS: 44). These causes accounted for about 83% of 350 infant deaths.²²



Infant Mortality (per 1000 births)



Since 1969, infant mortality rates in Louisiana have fallen 67%. In

1969, 25 of every 1,000 babies born in Louisiana died within the first year of their life. By 2012, that number had dropped to only 8.2 of every 1,000 babies.¹⁹

4th

Despite this progress, Louisiana's infant mortality rate remains above the national average. In 2012, Louisiana had the **fourth highest infant mortality rate in the nation.**

Compared to its neighboring states, Louisiana had a higher infant mortality rate than all except Mississippi (8.8).²⁰

The infant death rate in Louisiana in 2012 for blacks and other people groups (11.6 per 1,000 live births) is almost double that of whites (5.9). Even though there were almost 40% more births to women in Louisiana (36,217) than to non-white women (26,425), there were more infant deaths among black and other non-white women (296) than whites (215).²¹

[SNAPSHOT] Infant mortality rates in Louisiana fell significantly since 1969 but consistently remain above the national average. The infant mortality rate for blacks is nearly double that of whites.



Teen Births


7th

In 2012, 6,458 children were born to teenage mothers in Louisiana. Since 1960, more than 688,000 children in Louisiana have been born into similar households.²³ In 2012, Louisiana **ranked seventh** among the states regarding the birth rates of teenage mothers.²⁴

In 1960, only 19% of all births to teen mothers in Louisiana were **out of wedlock**.²⁵ By 2012, that number had **increased to 93%**.²⁶



Since 1960, the percentage of children born to teenagers in Louisiana has fallen by 38%, from 16.6% to 10.3% in 2012. The decline has been the most pronounced among whites, where the percentage of teenage mothers has dropped from 14.9% of all births to 7.9%.²⁷

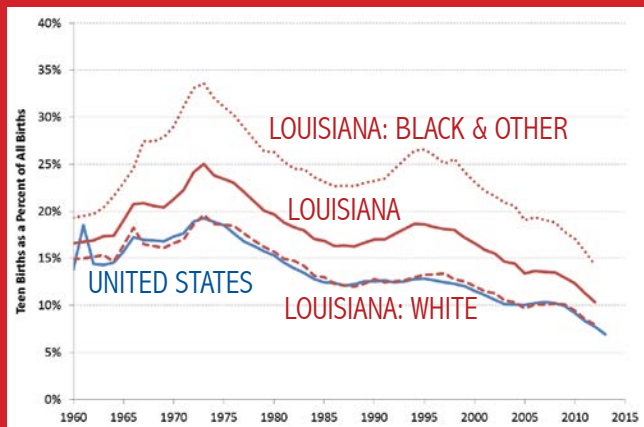
Among Louisiana teenagers, pregnancy rates were highest among 18- and 19-year-olds, with one in 12 becoming pregnant in 2011.²⁸ In 2010—the most recent year with complete data—**75% gave birth, 16% had a fetal loss, and nine percent opted for an abortion**.²⁹

[SNAPSHOT]

The percentage of births to teenage mothers in Louisiana and across the U.S. has declined but Louisiana consistently remains above the national average. Unlike in 1960, the vast majority of teen births are now out of wedlock.



Teen Births



Teen Pregnancies

[SNAPSHOT]

In Louisiana and in the U.S. as a whole, teen pregnancy rates have declined, with the largest declines occurring among non-white teens. Non-white teens still have pregnancy rates that are more than 50% above those of white teens.

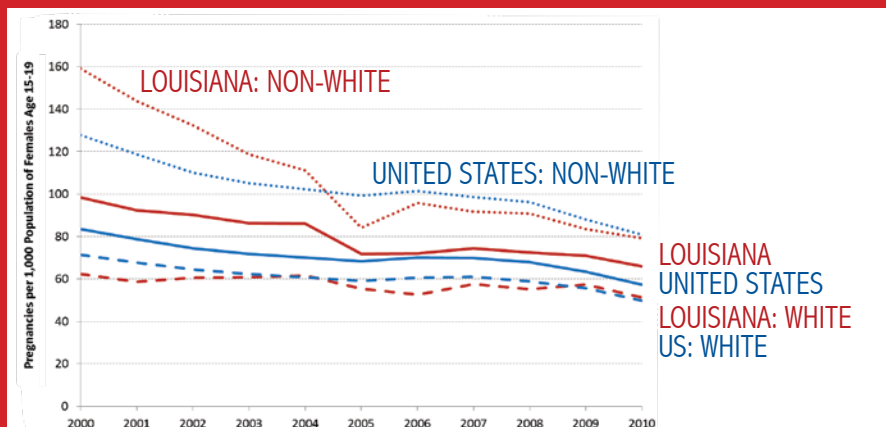


Between 2000 and 2010, the rate of pregnancies among teenagers in Louisiana and the United States declined by 33% and 31%, respectively. The largest declines were among nonwhite teenagers (Louisiana: -50%; US: -37%). Nevertheless, the teen pregnancy rate among nonwhites in Louisiana in 2010 was 54% higher than among whites.³⁰



In both Louisiana and the nation as a whole, **teen pregnancy rates have declined almost continuously.** Nationally, between 1990 and 2010, the teen pregnancy rate declined by 51%—from 116.9 to 57.4 pregnancies per 1,000 teen girls.³¹

Teen Pregnancies



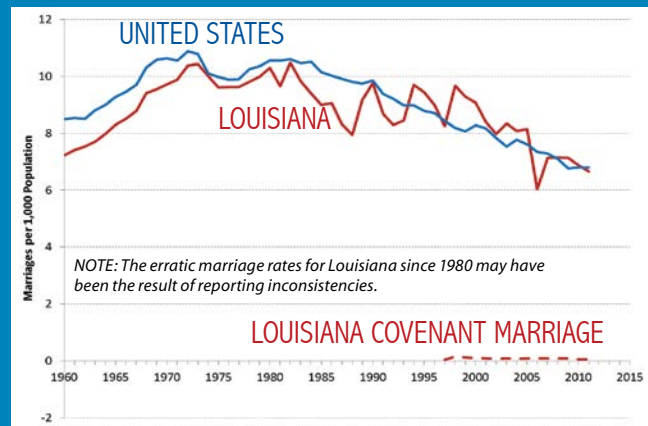
Marriage

In 1997, Louisiana became the first of three states (including Arizona and Arkansas) to add **covenant marriage** as a legal option. According to the website, Louisiana for Marriage:

Covenant marriages differ from regular marriages by requiring couples to seek marital counseling before filing for divorce. Based on the belief that many couples unnecessarily end their marriage without sufficient attempts at resolving conflict, covenant marriages provide an opportunity to resolve the conflict without sacrificing the marital union in the process. Of course, in the event of a serious fault (adultery, conviction of a felony, physical or sexual abuse, etc.) a divorce will be granted to the non-faulting spouse.³⁶

In 2010—the most recent year with available data—276 covenant marriages were performed in Louisiana.³⁷

Marriage Rate (per 1000 population)



[SNAPSHOT] Marriage rates have fallen in Louisiana and across the U.S. since 1960. In Louisiana, the marriage rate has dropped by over one-third since its peak in 1982 and as of 2009 Louisiana ranked 30th nationally in terms of marriage rate. Louisiana offers the option of a covenant marriage, which allows couples to agree, prior to marrying, to certain terms intended to promote and strengthen marriages and reduce the rate of divorce.



In 1960, married couples made up about 75% of all households in the United States. By 2011, that number had fallen to 48%.³²



In 2011, there were 30,424 marriages in Louisiana, a two percent decline from 31,194 marriages in 2010. This translates to a marriage rate of 6.7 marriages per 1,000 population.³³ Between 1960 and 2011, Louisiana's highest marriage rate of 10.5 was achieved in 1982. Since then, the state's marriage rate has fallen by 36%.³⁴

In 2009—the most recent year for which national figures are available—Louisiana's marriage rate of 6.4 marriages per 1,000 population was six percent lower than the national average (6.8), giving the state the 30th highest marriage rate in the nation.³⁵



Divorce

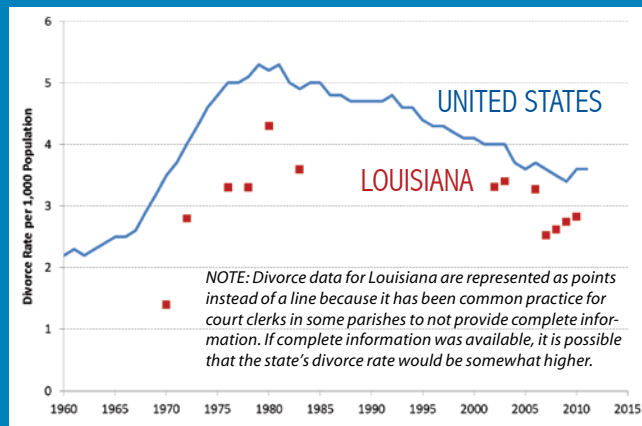
[SNAPSHOT] Divorce data in Louisiana are unreliable due to incomplete reporting by parishes, despite Louisiana's requirement in La. R.S. §40:57 that Clerks of Court track and report these statistics. The downward trend in divorce rates in the U.S. generally follows the trend of declining marriage rates.

Although Louisiana state law requires the complete collection of divorce data every year, in most years the data are incomplete, making them unusable for identifying trends in divorce.³⁸ The most recent data set (2010), which contains data from 58 of Louisiana's 64 parishes, indicates that there were at least 12,872 divorces in the state, for a

divorce rate of at least 2.8 divorces per 1,000 population. This is up from 2009, when there were 12,324 divorces in the state (59 parishes reporting).³⁹

The six parishes that did not report any divorce data in 2010 were: Bienville, Bossier, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, and Tensas. Three of these parishes—Bossier, Iberville, and Tensas—failed to report three times between 2006-2010, and St. Helena did not report four times in the past five years.⁴⁰

Divorce Rate (per 1000 population)



Index of Belonging and Rejection



In February 2014, Patrick Fagan of the Family Research Council published the fourth annual Index of Family Belonging and Rejection to measure the social health of American children. “Belonging” was defined as the percentage of children ages 15-17 who had grown up “with both their birth mother and their biological father legally married to one another since before or around the time of the teenager’s birth,” and “rejection” as the percentage of children in households where at least one of their biological parents was no longer in the home.

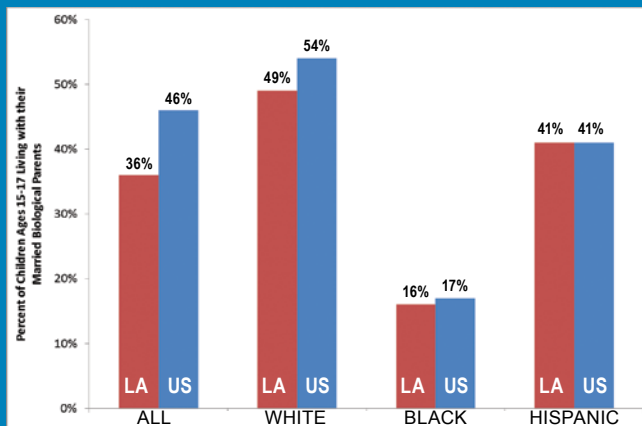


Of the 13.1 million teens in the **UNITED STATES** at the time of the study (2008-2011), **more than 7 million—54%—spent their childhood without at least one of their biological parents in an intact family.**⁴¹

Despite its reputation for strong families, the southeastern United States—including Louisiana—fared poorly when compared to the rest of the country. Louisiana’s score of 36% means that **62% of teens in Louisiana (113,000 of 183,000) did not grow up with both biological parents.**⁴² Nevertheless, Mississippi (32%) and the District of Columbia (17%) scored lower than Louisiana.⁴³

The most recent version of the Index also includes people group specific measures of belonging. Intact biological families among whites were less common in Louisiana (49%) than the nation as a whole (54%), while the percentages of the state’s intact biological families among blacks (16%) and Hispanics (41%) were similar to the national average (17% and 41%, respectively).⁴⁴

Index of Belonging



[SNAPSHOT] In Louisiana, thirty-six percent of children ages 15-17 live with their intact biological families, compared to forty-six percent nationally. “Intact biological families” are defined as birth mother and biological father legally married to each other during the child’s entire life.

Births to Unwed Mothers



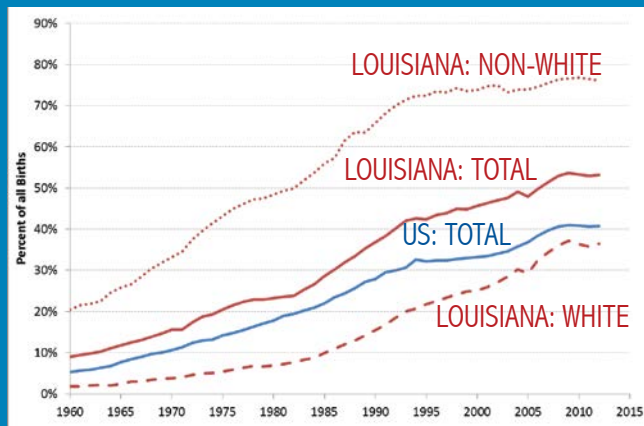
Since 1960, in **LOUISIANA** the number of births that were out of wedlock jumped **490%**, from 9% to 53% in 2012.⁴⁵ Nationwide, the percentage of **out-of-wedlock births increased 673%**, from 5% to 41%.⁴⁶ Over the past 50 years, more than 1.1 million children in Louisiana⁴⁷ and more than 48 million children nationwide were born to an unmarried mother.⁴⁸

In 1960, 2% of births to white mothers in Louisiana were out of wedlock. That number rose to 36.4% in 2012, an **almost twenty-fold increase (1,936%)**.⁴⁹ By comparison, the percentage of births to unwed, non-white women **has leveled out** after growing for more

than 30 years. In 2012, 76% of all children born in Louisiana to non-white mothers were born out of wedlock, compared to 20% in 1960, a 153% increase.⁵⁰

While the issue of unwed parents is usually discussed as it pertains to teenagers, **adult out-of-wedlock births are increasing at a faster rate than teens**. The percentage of out-of-wedlock births to mothers ages 15-19 rose from 22% of all births in 1970 to 27% in 2012, an increase of 22%. At the same time, the percentage of out-of-wedlock births to mothers between the ages of 20-24 increased 71% (38% to 65%) and the percentage for women ages 25-29 increased 81% (37% to 67%).⁵¹

Births to Unwed Mothers



[SNAPSHOT] The incidence of births to unwed mothers has increased dramatically in both Louisiana and the U.S. as a whole. Louisiana's percentage of births to unwed mothers is consistently higher than the U.S. average and has been above 50% since 2007.



Abortion Rates



Half of the pregnancies among American women are unintended, and about four in 10 of these are terminated by abortion. **From 1973 to 2011, nearly 53 million legal abortions were performed in America.** Forty-five percent of all abortions since 1973 have been for women who were not married at the time of the procedure.⁵²



According to Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals, there were 9,976 abortions performed in the state in 2013, or about one abortion for every 6.3 births. **Eleven percent of all abortions in Louisiana were performed on teenagers.**⁵³

23rd

In 2011—the most recent year for which national figures are available—Louisiana ranked 23rd in the nation in abortions. The state's abortion rate (13.1 abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44) was lower than that of Texas (13.5) but higher than those of Arkansas (7.6) and Mississippi (3.7).⁵⁴

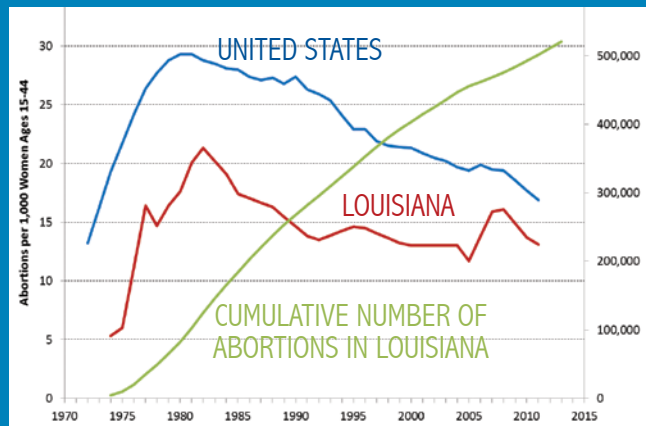
Nationally, an estimated 1.06 million abortions were performed in 2011, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a New York-based organization that gathers voluntary reports from abortion providers. The numbers of abortions performed in Louisiana from 1986 to 1991 are estimates because it was not until 1992 that the state law required full reporting from the providers of abortion services.⁵⁵

More than 521,000 abortions have been performed in Louisiana since the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973.⁵⁶ This number is almost 20% greater than the entire population of East Baton Rouge Parish (445,227 in 2013).⁵⁷

[SNAPSHOT]

In the U.S., about 2 in 10 pregnancies are terminated by abortion, and 4 in 10 *unintended* pregnancies are terminated similarly. The general trend in Louisiana and the U.S. is downward since the early 1980s. Since the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, over half a million abortions have been performed in Louisiana.

Abortion Rates (per 1000 Women Age 15-44)



Single-Parent Families

A signal indicator of cultural decline is the rise in the number of single-parent families. A growing number of studies show that virtually every social ill is directly related to **fatherless families**.

36%

In 2013, 36% of all Louisiana families with children under the age of 18 were single-parent homes, compared to about 32% nationwide.⁵⁸



Since 1960, the percentage of families headed by a single parent in Louisiana and the nation as a whole increased by 315% and 252%, respectively.⁵⁹

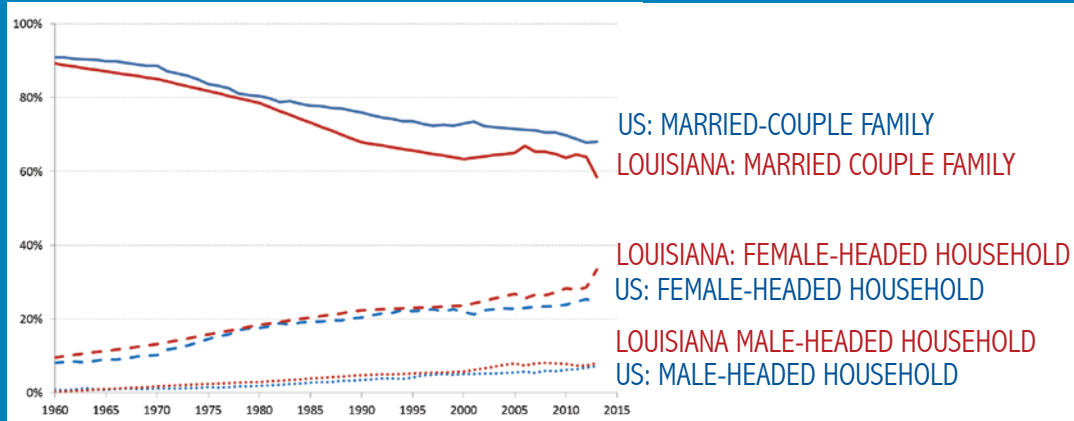
National data from the 1960 census shows the extent to which family composition has changed, when 91% of all families with children were married couples, 8% were single-parent, female-headed households, and 1%

were male-headed, single-parent households. By 2013, only 68% of American families with children were married couples, 25% were headed by a single, female parent, and 7% were single-parent, male-headed households.⁶⁰

[SNAPSHOT]

Over one out of three families with children under 18 in Louisiana are single-parent households. In Louisiana, the incidence of single-parent families increased by over 300% since 1960. Nationally, the incidence of single-parent families increased by over 250%.

Single-Parent Families



Foster Care



In 2013, there were 3,955 children in foster care in Louisiana, for a rate of **about 355 per 100,000**

children in the state. This is **lower than the national rate of 547 per 100,000** population (402,378 in foster care). Since 2004, the number of children in foster care in Louisiana and the nation as a whole have declined by 10% and 21%, respectively.⁶¹

Since 2004, the rate of children entering the foster care system in Louisiana has risen by 32%, but has decreased by 14% nationally.⁶² At the same time, the rate at which children have exited the system—either by being reunited with their immediate or

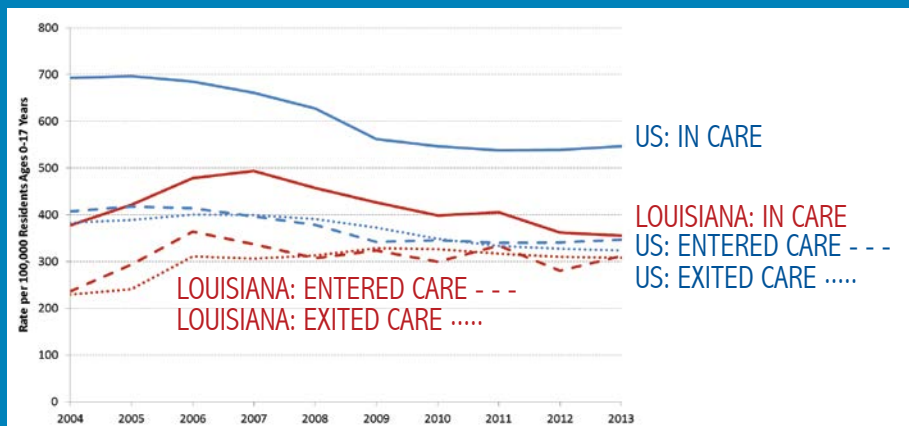
extended family, being adopted, or aging out—increased by 34% in Louisiana and decreased by 16% nationwide.⁶³



Nationally, the average length of time children spend in foster care decreased substantially, from 31 months to 22 months (-28%). This decrease in time is consistent across all people groups, including whites (-24%), blacks (-29%), Hispanics (-21%), and Asians (-19%).⁶⁴

Of the 3,429 children who exited the system in 2013, 731 (21%) were adopted. Most of these adoptions were by foster parents (682: 93%), of which 43% (291) were biological relatives to the child.⁶⁵

Foster Care Children (per 100,000 residents 0-17 years)



[SNAPSHOT] From 2004-2013, the number of children per 100,000 population in foster care in Louisiana was consistently below the national average. Over the same period, the number of children in Louisiana who entered foster care increased by over 25% while the national rate declined by nearly 15%.

Adoption



www.louisianaheartgallery.com



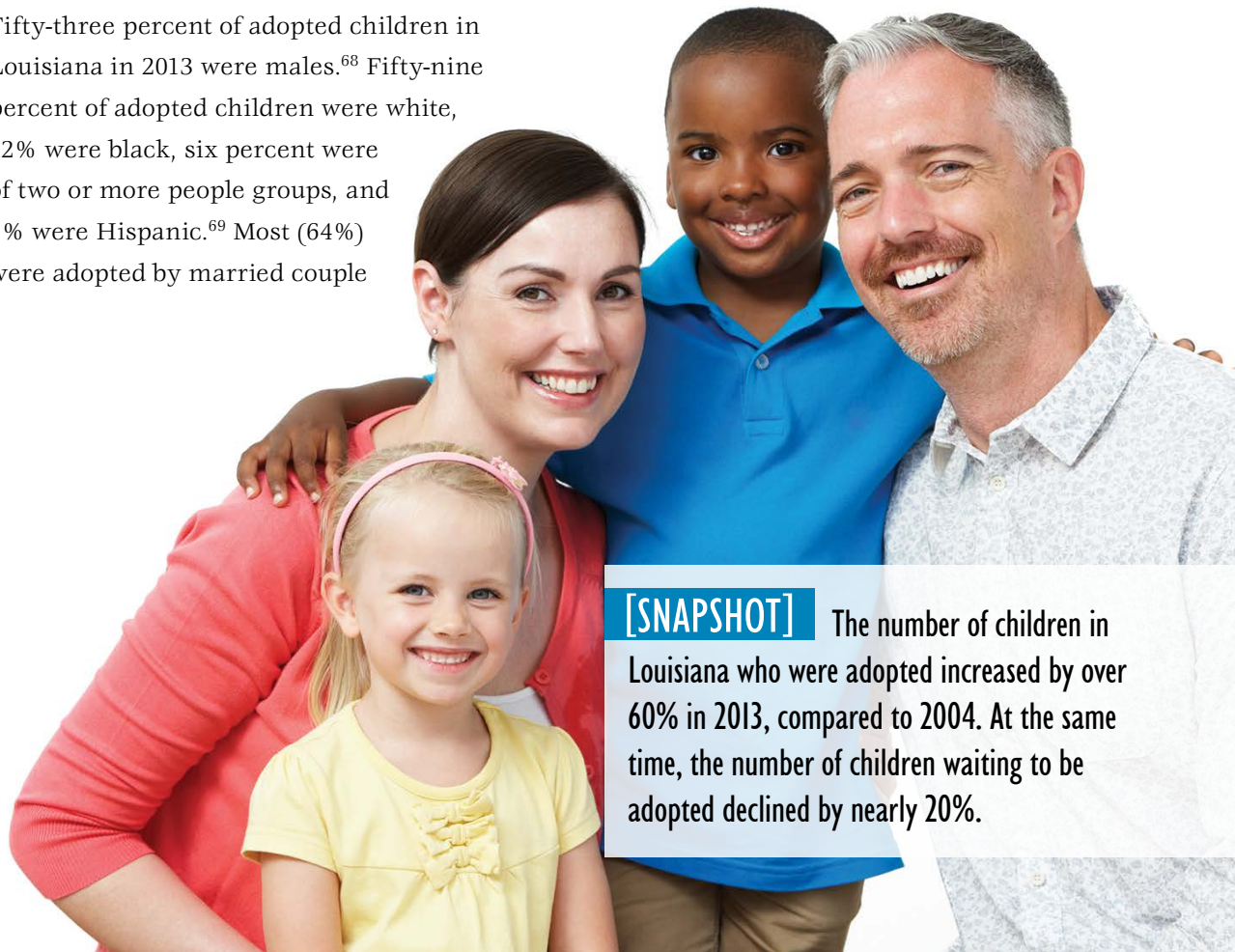
In 2013, approximately 731 children were adopted. This is up 61% from 453 children in 2004. During the

same time period, the number of children waiting to be adopted declined by 18%.⁶⁶ The difference between the number of children waiting for adoption and the number of children who were adopted has steadily closed, from 726 in 2004 to 230 in 2013.⁶⁷

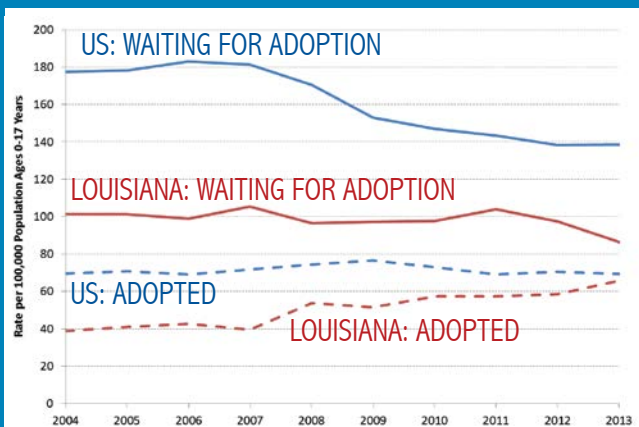
Fifty-three percent of adopted children in Louisiana in 2013 were males.⁶⁸ Fifty-nine percent of adopted children were white, 32% were black, six percent were of two or more people groups, and 2% were Hispanic.⁶⁹ Most (64%) were adopted by married couple

households, followed by single females (34%). Only 2% of adoptions were to either unmarried couples or single males.⁷⁰

In 2013, the most common age range for adoption in Louisiana was 1-5 years (55%), followed by 6-10 years (29%) and 11-15 years (11%). Only 2% of adopted children were 16-17 years of age.⁷¹



[SNAPSHOT] The number of children in Louisiana who were adopted increased by over 60% in 2013, compared to 2004. At the same time, the number of children waiting to be adopted declined by nearly 20%.



Academic Achievement



In general, the more diplomas an adult holds, the greater their earning potential.

According to data collected in 2013 by the U.S. Census Bureau, possessing a high school diploma raises personal income for Louisiana residents by almost \$7,500 (\$27,223) and a bachelor's degree by almost \$26,800 (\$46,512).⁷⁵

The price of attaining a college degree, however, can be financially taxing long after a student graduates. According to a November 2014 report by The Institute for College Access & Success, 43% of Louisiana students who graduated from a public or not-for-profit college or university in 2013 had an average loan debt of \$23,358, slightly less than the national average of \$28,400.⁷⁶



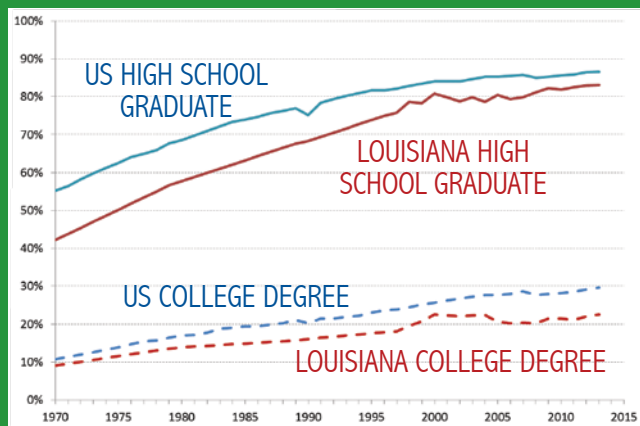
Since 1970, the percentage of Louisiana residents age 25 and older with a high school diploma has almost doubled (97% gain), while the percentage of adults with at least a four-year college degree has increased by 148%. By comparison, the percentage of adults nationwide with at least a high school diploma or a college degree has risen 57% and 177%, respectively.⁷²

In 2012, Louisiana ranked 48th in the nation in the percentage of adults age 25 and older with at least a high school diploma or its equivalent⁷³ and 47th for adults holding at least a bachelor's degree, indicating the majority of the states are closely clustered to the national average.⁷⁴

[SNAPSHOT]

The Louisiana high school graduation rate, 83%, follows closely behind the national rate, 87%. Louisiana college graduation rates (23%) are slightly behind the national rate (30%).

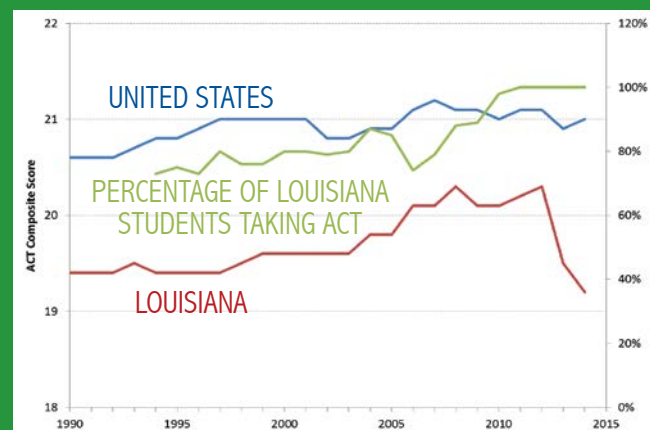
Academic Achievement



ACT Scores

In 2014, all 49,178 graduating high school seniors in Louisiana took the ACT. The average composite score was 19.2, **the fourth lowest** in the nation.⁷⁷ Of the 30 states in which most students took the ACT in 2014, **Louisiana was in 28th place.**⁷⁸

The recent drop in Louisiana's overall ACT score may be a combination of two factors: a "regression to the mean" that is the result of a 100% testing rate; and the fact that ACT uses a student's most recent test score instead of their highest score to calculate the state average.⁷⁹



Not every student taking the ACT in 2014 had college aspirations. While earning a bachelor's degree or better (i.e., graduate studies or a professional degree) was the most common goal for participants (35,356; 72%), nine percent (4,237) planned to earn a two-year college degree), five percent (2,256) indicated an interest in a vocational or technical school, and about 15% (7,329) either reported different career aspirations or gave no response.⁸⁰

71% Seventy-one percent (35,037) of Louisiana high school students taking the ACT in 2014 were core course completers—that is, they had taken at least four years of English and three years of math (algebra and higher), social sciences, and natural sciences. For these students, the composite average was 20.5, compared to a national average of 21.8. The average score for those who were not core course completers was 15.9, compared to a national average of 18.9.⁸¹



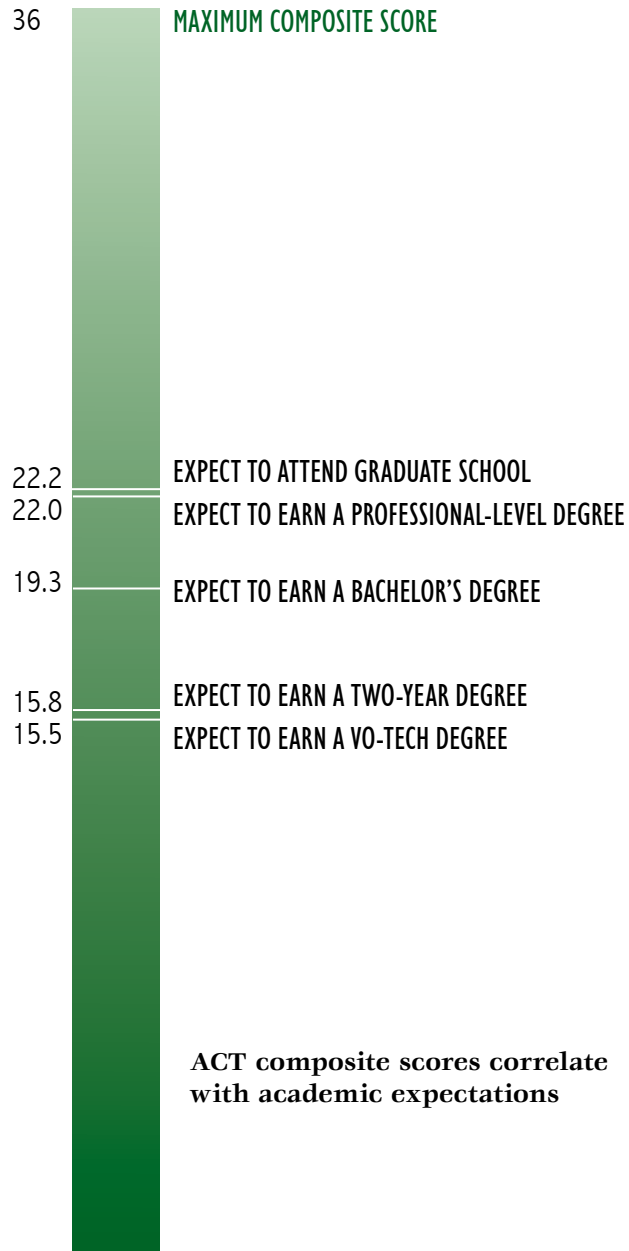
In 1989, the ACT underwent significant revisions to measure academic development in math, English, reading, and science reasoning.⁸² Since 1990, **Louisiana students' scores on the "Enhanced ACT" have been stagnant**, with students typically scoring between 19 and 20.⁸³

(continued)

[SNAPSHOT] In 2014, Louisiana ranked near the bottom in terms of average ACT composite score. When comparing Louisiana students who completed core course requirements to their counterparts elsewhere, the Louisiana scores were closer to the national averages.



ACT Scores (continued)



In 2014, female ACT test takers in Louisiana had higher average composite (19.4), English (19.5) and reading (19.8) scores than males (19.1, 18.3, and 19.1, respectively). In the categories of mathematics and science, males scored better (19.1 and 19.2) than females (18.7 and 19.0)⁸⁴

In 2014, Asian students had the highest average composite score (22.1), followed by whites (20.9) and students of two or more ethnicities (20.1). By comparison, blacks scored lowest (16.6), followed by American Indians (17.8) and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders (18.8).⁸⁵

ACT scores also differed based on the academic aspirations of the participants. Students who intended to pursue either a vocational-technical degree or two-year degree after graduation had lower average composite scores (15.5 and 15.8, respectively) than those planning to earn a bachelor's degree (19.3). Conversely, students who planned to attend graduate school or earn a professional-level degree had even higher composite scores (22.2 and 22.0, respectively).⁸⁶



SAT Scores

Ethnicity is a significant predictor of SAT scores in

Louisiana. For reading, students of Puerto Rican origin had the highest average score (618), followed by Mexican Americans (608) and whites (579). It should be noted that the first two groups each constituted about one-half of one percent of all test takers. By comparison, blacks scored lowest (487), followed by other Hispanics (556) and American Indians (563).

Somewhat similar findings for Louisiana students were found for math: Puerto Ricans scored highest (618), followed by Asians (624) and whites (570). Again, blacks' scores were lowest (474), followed by American Indians (519) and other Hispanics (540).

The SAT is taken by significantly fewer students in Louisiana than the ACT, suggesting that the college-bound seniors in Louisiana who opt to take it are considering attending out-of-state schools upon graduation.

In 2014, approximately 2,114 college-bound senior high school students in Louisiana took the SAT.⁸⁷ Of these, the average reading and math scores were 561 and 556, respectively. The state's reading and math scores are **64 points and 43 points above the national average**, respectively.⁸⁸

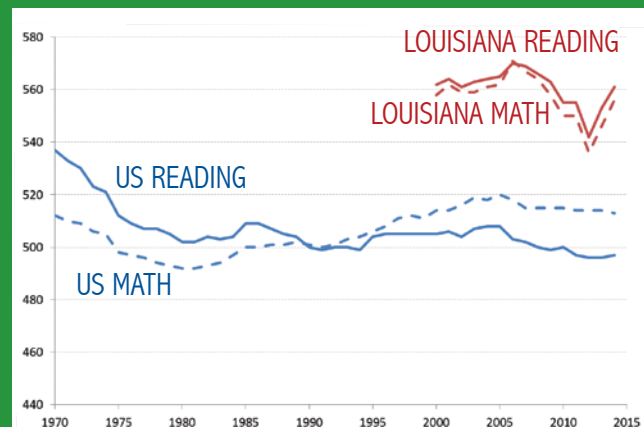
In 2012—the most recent year complete data are available—only six percent of all college-bound Louisiana high school seniors took the SAT.

Their reading and math scores (531 and 529, respectively) were each the 23rd highest in the nation.⁸⁹

Males in Louisiana scored higher on reading (572) and math (581) than did females (552 and 537, respectively). In the category of writing, though, males scored only marginally better (552) than females (548).⁹⁰

[SNAPSHOT] Louisiana students scored well above the national averages on the SAT. Louisiana students taking the SAT are likely looking at out-of-state colleges, explaining the overall small percentage of Louisiana SAT test-takers.

SAT Scores



NAEP Scores

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) was mandated by Congress in 1969 to monitor the knowledge, skills, and performance of the nation's school children. One form of monitoring has been national, standardized tests in mathematics, science, reading, geography, and other subjects. In 2013, every state and the District of Columbia participated in the mathematics and reading exams.⁹¹

[SNAPSHOT] Louisiana 4th and 8th graders have consistently scored below the national averages on NAEP mathematics and reading tests. In 2013 NAEP math tests, Louisiana's 4th graders ranked 49th nationally and Louisiana's 8th graders ranked 48th. Louisiana 4th graders and 8th graders both ranked 48th in reading in 2013.

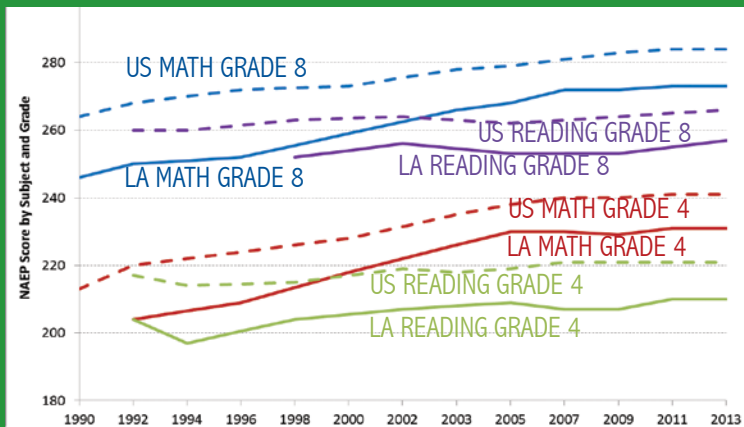
49th

NAEP uses a scale of 0 to 500 for its mathematics and reading tests. In 2013, Louisiana's 4th grade math students ranked 49th in the nation with an average score of 231, ten points below the national average.⁹² Twenty-seven percent of Louisiana's 4th graders scored at or above proficiency, compared to 42 points below the national average.⁹³

48th

In the same year, Louisiana's 8th grade math students ranked 48th in the nation with an average NAEP score of 273, with 21% at or above proficiency. By comparison, the national average was 284, with 34% at or above proficiency.⁹⁴ (continued)

NAEP Scores (Scale of 1 to 500)



NAEP Scores (continued)

48th

In 2013, Louisiana's **4th grade students** ranked 48th in the nation in **reading** with an average score of 210, 11 points lower than the national average.⁹⁵ Twenty-three percent of Louisiana's students scored at or above proficiency, compared to 34% of students nationwide.⁹⁶

48th

During the same year, Louisiana's **8th grade students** ranked 48th in the nation in **reading** with an average score of 257, nine points below the national average.⁹⁷ Twenty-four percent of Louisiana's students scored at or above proficiency, compared to 35% of students nationwide.⁹⁸

"A"

The Louisiana Department of Education's 2014 District Performance Scores showed 10 districts earning an **"A" grade for outstanding student achievement**: Zachary Community Schools, Orleans Parish (OPSB only), Central Community Schools, Ascension Parish, St. Charles Parish, Vernon Parish, St. Tammany Parish, Plaquemines Parish, Livingston Parish, and West Feliciana Parish.

"D"

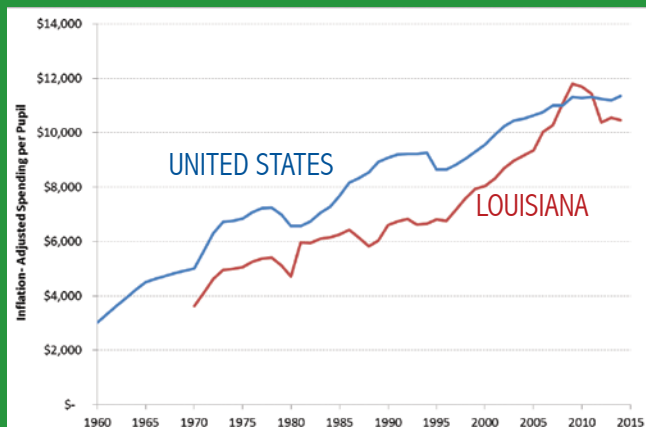
The 11 districts with the poorest grades—all **earning a "D" grade**—were: City of Monroe School District, Union Parish, Red River Parish, City of Baker School District, Claiborne Parish, Morehouse Parish, Madison Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish (RSD only), City of Bogalusa School District, St. Helena Parish, and the Recovery School District.⁹⁹

K-12 Spending Per Pupil



[SNAPSHOT] Historically, Louisiana spent less per pupil than the national average.

Inflation-Adjusted Spending per Pupil



According to the Louisiana Board of Education (LBOE), public schools in **the state spent an average of \$12,050** per student in the 2013-2014 school year, down 1.5% from the inflation-adjusted amount spent the previous year (\$12,239). In addition to salaries, supplies, and other in-class expenditures, this amount includes “equipment costs, facilities acquisitions and construction service costs, and debt service costs.”¹⁰⁰



The National Education Association (NEA) also collects data on per-student expenditures but excludes debt retirement, investments, credit extensions and agency transactions, so its calculations are lower than those of the LBOE. According to the NEA, public schools in **LOUISIANA spent an average of \$10,472 per student in the 2013-2014 school year**. This is a 1.6% increase from the inflation-adjusted amount spent in 2012-2013 (\$10,548). By comparison, **NATIONAL** spending per student increased 1.5% from \$11,191 to \$11,355.¹⁰¹

Inflation-adjusted expenditures using both measures peaked in the 2008-2009 school year, with the state spending data for the LBOE and NEA totaling \$13,447 and \$11,804 per student, respectively.¹⁰² Since then, **totals for both measures have declined by about 10%.**

Despite occasional income shortfalls, Louisiana's public elementary and secondary schools have received **a large increase in revenue in the past 50 years**. According to NEA data, inflation-adjusted spending per student in **LOUISIANA** has **increased 189% since 1970**, compared to 127% for **THE NATION** as a whole.¹⁰³

In the 1969-70 school year, Louisiana's per-student outlays for K-12 public education (\$3,618 in NEA-reported, inflation-adjusted dollars) were 28% less than the national average (\$5,013). By the 2013-14 school year, Louisiana had **narrowed the gap to 8% below the national average**.¹⁰⁴

Education Choice in Louisiana

The cost savings to federal, state and local governments as a result of educational choice is significant. Assuming the \$12,050 in costs needed to educate one student in the 2013-2014 school year, the savings to the state for the 15.4% of students who are either home-schooled or attending private schools exceeds \$1.7 billion per year.



25%

In 2014, the families of one of every four K-12 students in Louisiana—almost 235,000—chose another educational option besides public schools for their children. Most of them (122,727; 52%) attended some type of **private school**,¹⁰⁵ with another 70,000 (32%) attending **charter schools**—public schools that offer expanded educational opportunities for their students in exchange for being held to higher standards and levels of accountability.¹⁰⁶

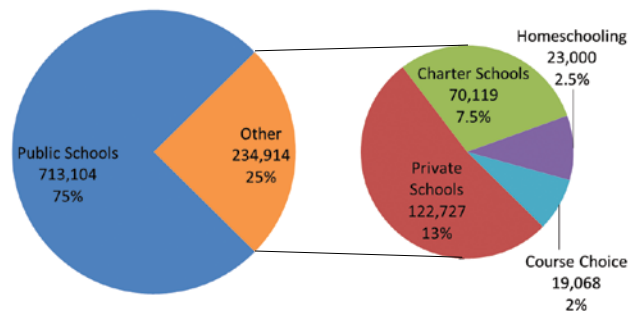
Estimates suggest at least 10% of all students exercising educational options (23,000) are **homeschooling**, a 90% increase

since the 2002-2003 academic year.¹⁰⁷ Eight percent of students (19,000) participate in at least one **Supplemental Course Academy**, an **online program** offering additional programs such as remediation, dual enrollment, and career and technical preparation high school students.¹⁰⁸

[SNAPSHOT] One-fourth of Louisiana K-12 students exercised some form of education choice in 2014. 15.4% opted for private, parochial, or home education. Homeschooling has nearly doubled since 2002-2003. Another 9% exercised choice through charter school or course choice.

K-12 School Enrollment by Type (2013-2014)

K-12 School Enrollment in Louisiana, by Type: 2013-2014 School Year



Median Household Income



Since 1970, the inflation-adjusted, median household income for Louisiana residents has increased 22%, while the national median has decreased 16%. In 2013, the typical Louisiana household earned an inflation-adjusted \$44,164, while the typical American household earned \$52,250.¹⁰⁹

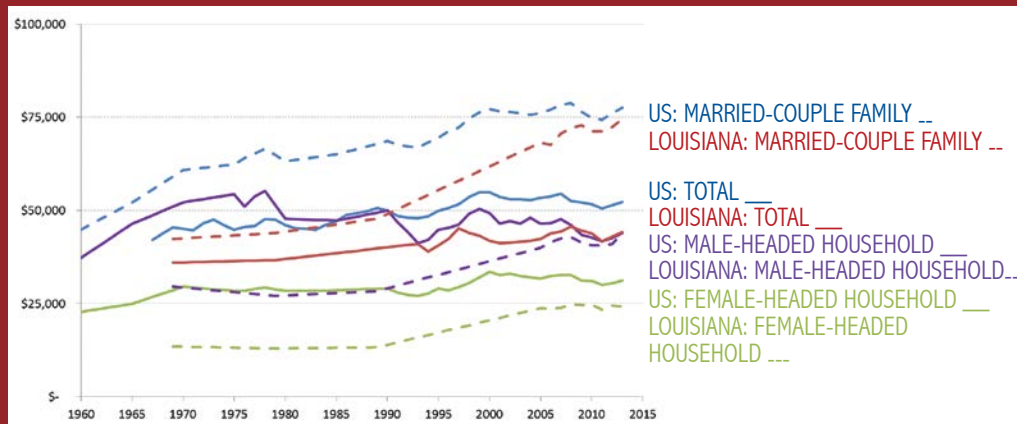


In both Louisiana and the nation as a whole, improvements in earnings were greatest among **married-couple families**. In 2013, the average married-couple family in Louisiana earned \$74,602, 75% more than in 1970. By comparison, American married-couple families nationwide earned an average of \$77,607, about 27% more than in 1970 (after adjusting for inflation).¹¹⁰

[SNAPSHOT] Inflation-adjusted median household income in Louisiana from 1970 to 2013 increased while the national figure declined, resulting in a narrowing of the gap between Louisiana's median household income and that of the entire U.S. to less than 20%. Married couples in Louisiana and in the U.S. enjoyed the greatest improvement in earnings during that time, and the gap between married couples in Louisiana and married couples in the entire U.S. was just 4% in 2013.

In general, the gap between Louisiana's median household income and that of the nation as a whole has narrowed since 1970, from an inflation-adjusted 25% in 1970 (\$9,089) to 18% (\$8,086) in 2013. **Married-couple families in Louisiana narrowed the gap from 43% (a gap of \$18,353 in 1970) to 4% in 2013 (\$3,005).** Female-headed households in Louisiana had similar success, reducing the gap from 120% (\$16,118) in 1970 to 29% (\$7,010) in 2013. In the same way, male-headed households saw the national-to-state income gap close from 78% (\$22,798 in inflation-adjusted dollars in 1970) to only 0.04% (\$16) in 2013.¹¹¹

Median Household Income



Adequate Housing



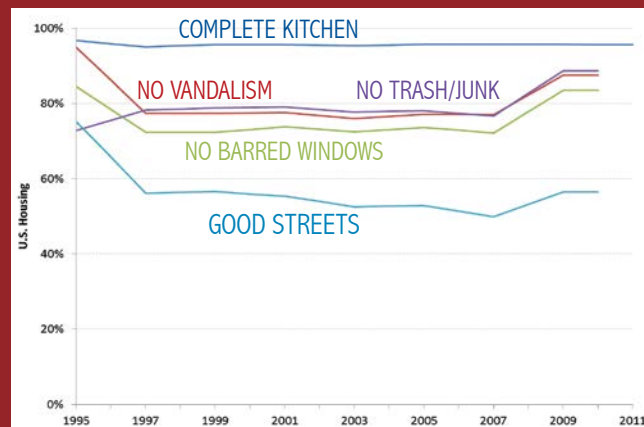
Every two years, the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a survey of housing units across the country and in selected metropolitan areas. According to the most recent national survey of housing in 2011, almost 96% of homes have a fully equipped kitchen (including a sink, refrigerator, and oven or burner), 93% have at least one working smoke detector, 42% have at least one working carbon monoxide detector, and 90% have a furnace, hot water or steam system, or built-in electric heat pump or heater.¹¹²

Another way to measure the adequacy of housing is by rating the quality and safety of their surroundings. In 2009, more than

80% of all homes in the United States were not near vandalized buildings (87%), free of trash or junk on the streets (89%), or not near buildings with bars on their windows (83%). On the other hand, almost 40% noted that the streets near their home were in need of at least minor repairs.¹¹³

[SNAPSHOT] For the U.S. as a whole, nearly all homes have a fully-equipped kitchen. Since 2007, housing adequacy has improved on the basis of no nearby vandalism, no trash or junk on the streets and no barred windows, and over 8 out of 10 homes can claim all of these attributes.

Adequate Housing



Families in Poverty



The U.S. Census Bureau updates its estimates of poverty annually using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The Bureau's definition of poverty counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits, such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps.¹¹⁴



In 2013, about one in every eight American households with children

was in poverty. Since 1960, the percentage of families with children in poverty has fallen by 41% nationwide.¹¹⁵



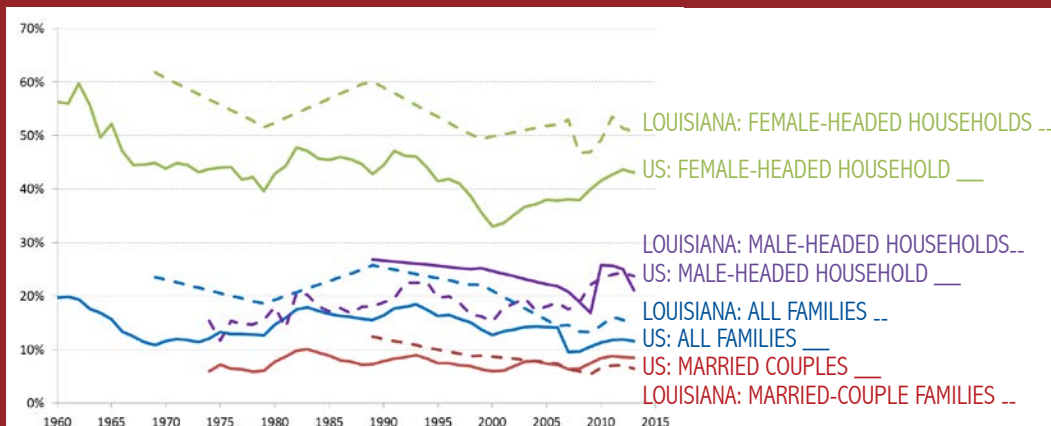
In Louisiana, about one in seven of all families with children (15.3%) were in poverty. Since 1969—the farthest

data on family poverty at the state level are available—the percentage of families in poverty in Louisiana has declined by 35%.¹¹⁶

Since 1974—the first year detailed figures are available for married couples and male-headed households at the national level—the percentage of all families in poverty has declined by four percent, from 12.1% to about 11.6% in 2013. Because **married couples have the lowest poverty rate of all household types**, their increase from an already-low 6% in 1974 to 8.5% in 2013 appears larger than it actually is.¹¹⁷ **Between 2007 and 2009, only about 6.8% of all married couple families with children lacked the resources to be above poverty.**¹¹⁸

(continued)

Families in Poverty



[SNAPSHOT] One in eight households with children in the U.S. is below the poverty level. For married couples with children, 8.5% are in poverty. In male-headed households the comparable figure is about 25% and for female-headed households the figure is over 40%.

Families in Poverty (continued)



Since 1989—the first year state-specific data are available for married couple families—the **percentage of married couple families in poverty has dropped by 48%**. As with the national data, married couples in Louisiana have the lowest rates of poverty of all family types.¹¹⁹

Male-headed households nationwide had a 31% increase in poverty from 1989 to 2012, while those in Louisiana experienced a 21% decline in poverty. While male-headed homes tend to earn more than those headed by a female, both single-parent household types are more susceptible to the risk of

going from one income to no income than in homes where there are or could be dual earners.¹²⁰

Between 1969 and 2013, the percentage of households headed by a single female declined by 4% nationally and by 18% in Louisiana. Female-headed households have traditionally been the most likely to be in poverty, with **an average national poverty rate of 42%** since 1974. Moreover, female-headed households at the national level had a poverty rate ten percentage points lower (33%) as recently as 2000 before returning to its steady climb.¹²¹



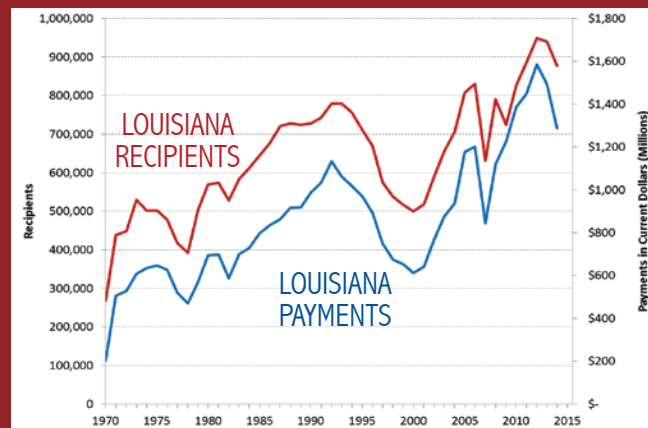
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Food Stamps

The current food stamp program began as a pilot program in 1961, was made a permanent program (operated at states' option) in 1964, and was made a mandatory program for all states in 1974.



Foods Stamps



Since 1970, the inflation-adjusted cost of the food stamp program in Louisiana and the nation as a whole has increased 532% and 2,004%, respectively.¹²²

In fiscal year 2014, 46.5 million Americans received food stamps, at a cost of more than \$70 billion. Of these, **877,000 were Louisiana residents**, at a cost of \$1.3 billion.¹²³ Since 1970, the number of program participants in Louisiana has increased 227%, while national participation has increased 972%.¹²⁴



The number of food stamp recipients in **LOUISIANA** decreased substantially at two points: between

1973 and 1978, and between 1993 and 2000. Since 2000, the number of participants has increased 75%, from 500,000 to 877,000 in 2014, when about one in every five Louisianans received some support from food stamps.¹²⁵



Between 2000 and 2014, the number of program participants **NATIONWIDE** has increased 171%, from 17.2 million to 46.5 million.¹²⁶ The number of **Americans on food stamps** has increased during this fourteen-year period from one in 16 to about one in seven.¹²⁷



[SNAPSHOT] In 2014, about one in every five people in Louisiana received some form of food stamp support. The annual cost of these programs in Louisiana is well over \$1 billion and across the entire U.S. the cost is over \$46 billion. Since 1970, number of participants and the cost of food stamp programs on an inflation-adjusted basis has grown significantly. While still quite substantial, the increases in participation and cost in Louisiana have been less than those in the total U.S.

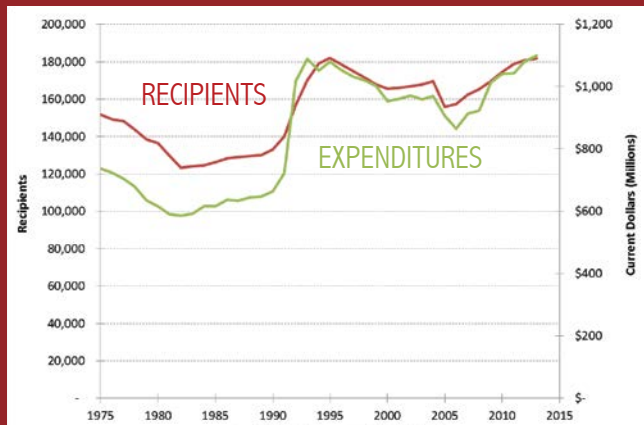
SSI Benefits

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides payments to the aged, blind, and disabled who are poor. Prior to its implementation as a federal program in the mid-1970s, individual states operated programs to assist people in these categories.¹²⁸

During the last 30 years, SSI changed from mainly serving elderly individuals to being a disability program.¹²⁹ In 2013, the largest categories of SSI payments in Louisiana were to **persons claiming blindness or disability** (167,547; 92%).¹³⁰

Since 1975, the inflation-adjusted total of SSI payments to Louisiana residents **increased 49%**. In 2013, payments to the 181,600 recipients of SSI in Louisiana **totaled about \$1.1 billion**.¹³¹

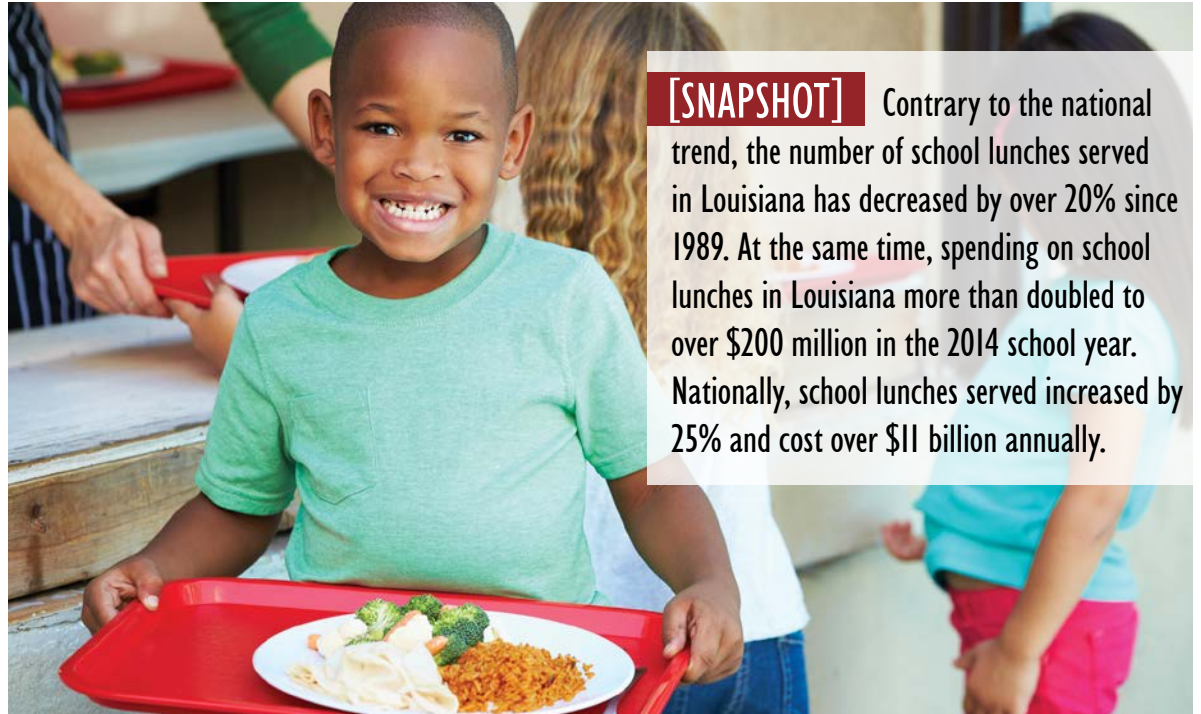
SSI Benefits



[SNAPSHOT] Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments in Louisiana have increased by nearly 50% since 1975 on an inflation-adjusted basis. Since its inception in the mid-1970s, this federal program has expanded in scope from being primarily directed towards needy elderly individuals to now being a broader disability program with annual payments in Louisiana in excess of \$1 billion.

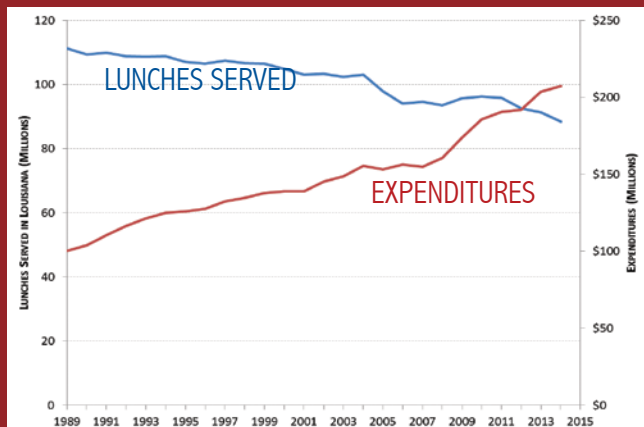
School Lunches

The National School Lunch Program began as a Depression-era program to provide surplus agricultural commodities to schools with needy children. In 1946, it was made a permanent federal program, and in 1962, funds were authorized for free and reduced price meals.¹³²



[SNAPSHOT] Contrary to the national trend, the number of school lunches served in Louisiana has decreased by over 20% since 1989. At the same time, spending on school lunches in Louisiana more than doubled to over \$200 million in the 2014 school year. Nationally, school lunches served increased by 25% and cost over \$11 billion annually.

School Lunches



During the 2014 school year, approximately 554,000 **LOUISIANA** public school students (77% of all students) qualified for **88 million free and reduced-priced meals**. **NATIONALLY**, about 5 billion meals were served during the same school year to 30 million students, or about 61% of all public K-12 students.¹³³ Since 1989, the number of meals served in **LOUISIANA** has **decreased by about 21%**, while increasing about 25% **NATIONALLY**.¹³⁴



For the 2014 school year, estimates of the total cost of the school lunch program in **LOUISIANA** are **\$207.3 million** and \$11.3 billion **NATIONWIDE**. Since 1989, the total amount spent on school lunches in Louisiana and nationwide has increased 107% and 277%, respectively.¹³⁵

The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) is also known as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide matching funds to help provide health insurance to families with children. It was created in 1997 to assist children in families with incomes that are low, but too high to qualify for Medicaid.¹³⁶

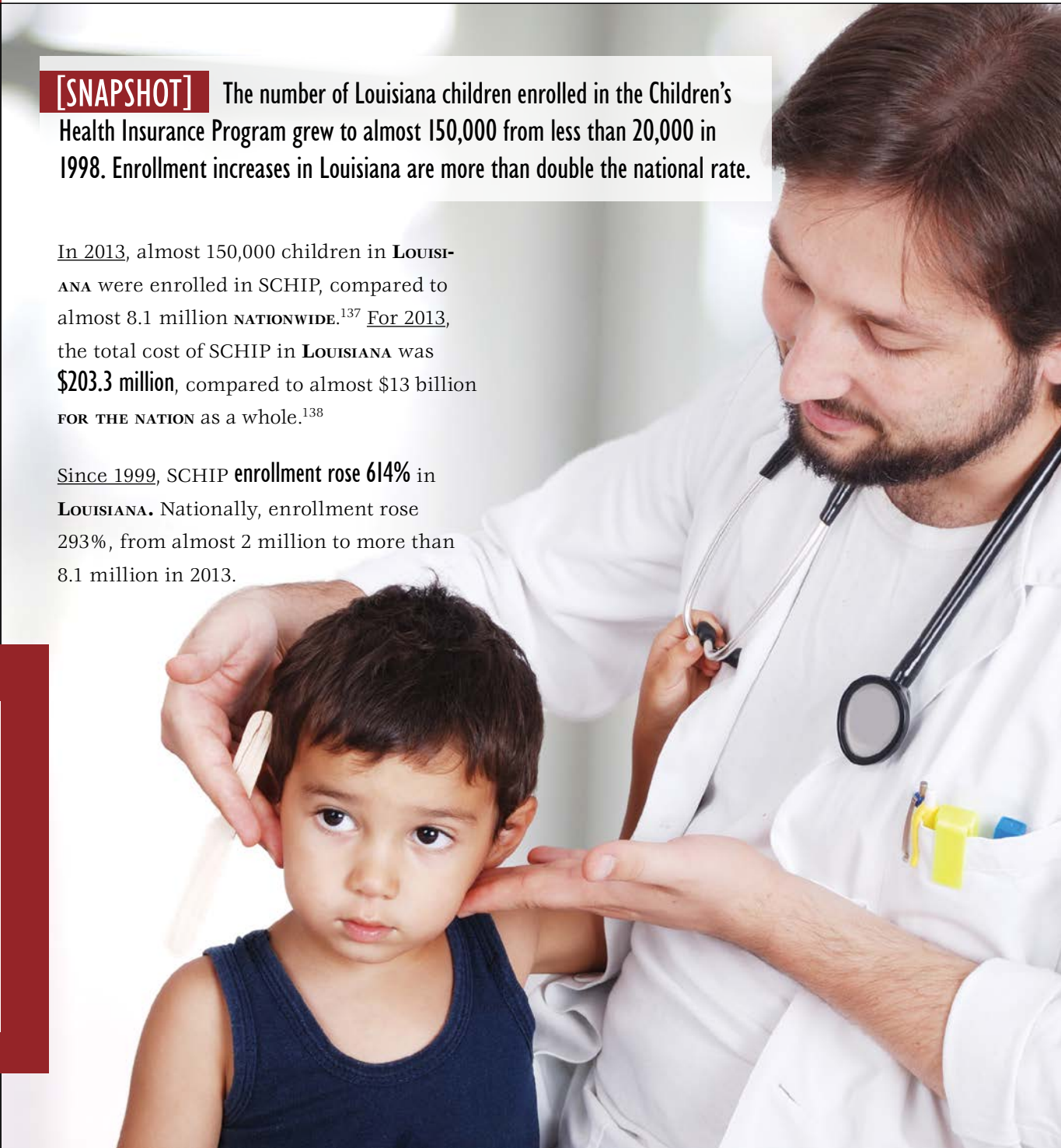
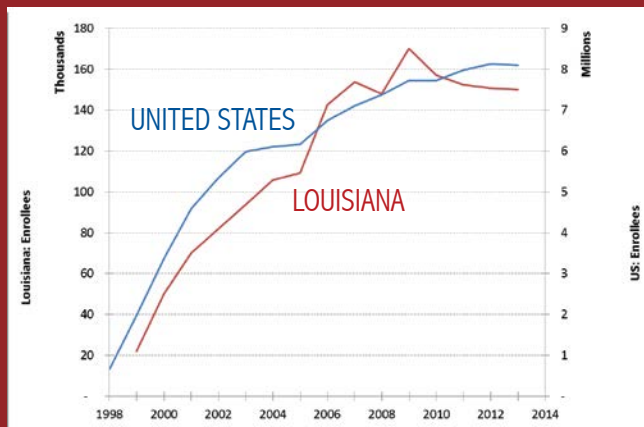
SCHIP/CHIP Benefits

[SNAPSHOT] The number of Louisiana children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program grew to almost 150,000 from less than 20,000 in 1998. Enrollment increases in Louisiana are more than double the national rate.

In 2013, almost 150,000 children in LOUISIANA were enrolled in SCHIP, compared to almost 8.1 million NATIONWIDE.¹³⁷ For 2013, the total cost of SCHIP in LOUISIANA was \$203.3 million, compared to almost \$13 billion FOR THE NATION as a whole.¹³⁸

Since 1999, SCHIP enrollment rose 614% in LOUISIANA. Nationally, enrollment rose 293%, from almost 2 million to more than 8.1 million in 2013.

SCHIP Benefits Enrollees



Crime Rates



From 1960 to 1984, Louisiana's crime rate remained below the national average. Since then, the state's crime rate has averaged about 21% above the national average.¹⁴³



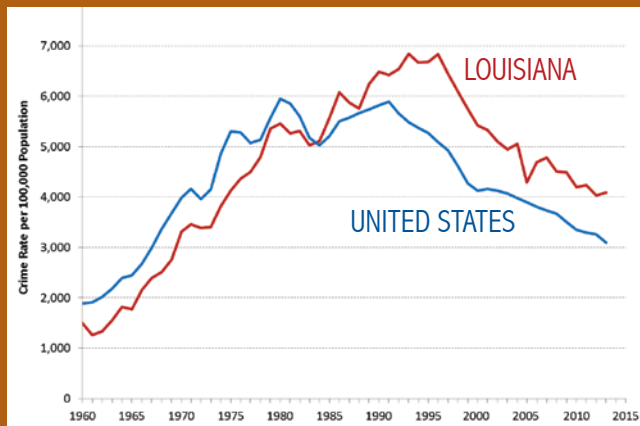
Since 1960, Louisiana's crime rate, which takes into account population changes, **increased 174%**, from 1,495 crimes per 100,000 residents to 4,092 in 2013.¹⁴⁰ In 2013, Louisiana reported **189,295 Type I crimes**—murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.¹⁴¹ The 2013 figure is down from the **1996 peak** of 297,500 crimes.¹⁴²



About **9.8 million crimes** were reported in the United States in 2013. This is down from the 1991 peak, when there were almost 14.9 million crimes. In 2013, Louisiana's share of all crimes in the United States (1.9%) was slightly higher than its representative population (1.5%).¹⁴⁴

[SNAPSHOT] Since 1984, Louisiana's crime rate has averaged about 21% above the national average. Crime rates in Louisiana and in the U.S. rose until the early-to mid-1990s and have declined since that time.

Crime Rates (per 100,000 population)

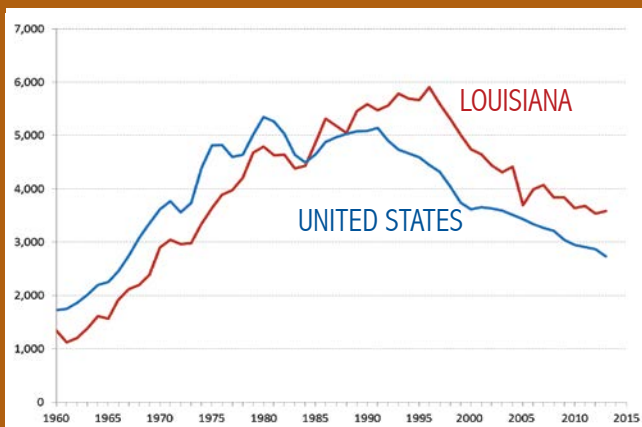


Violent Crime



[SNAPSHOT] Violent crimes in Louisiana and in the U.S. rose dramatically until the early- to mid-1990s. The Louisiana and U.S. rates have declined since then but remain well above the 1960 levels. Louisiana's violent crime rate rose above the national average in the mid-1970s, where it has remained.

Violent Crime (per 100,000 population)



There were **23,609 violent crimes**—murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—reported in Louisiana **in 2013**. This statistic is down 48% from the peak of 45,600 in 1993, but it is 233% higher than in 1960.¹⁴⁵

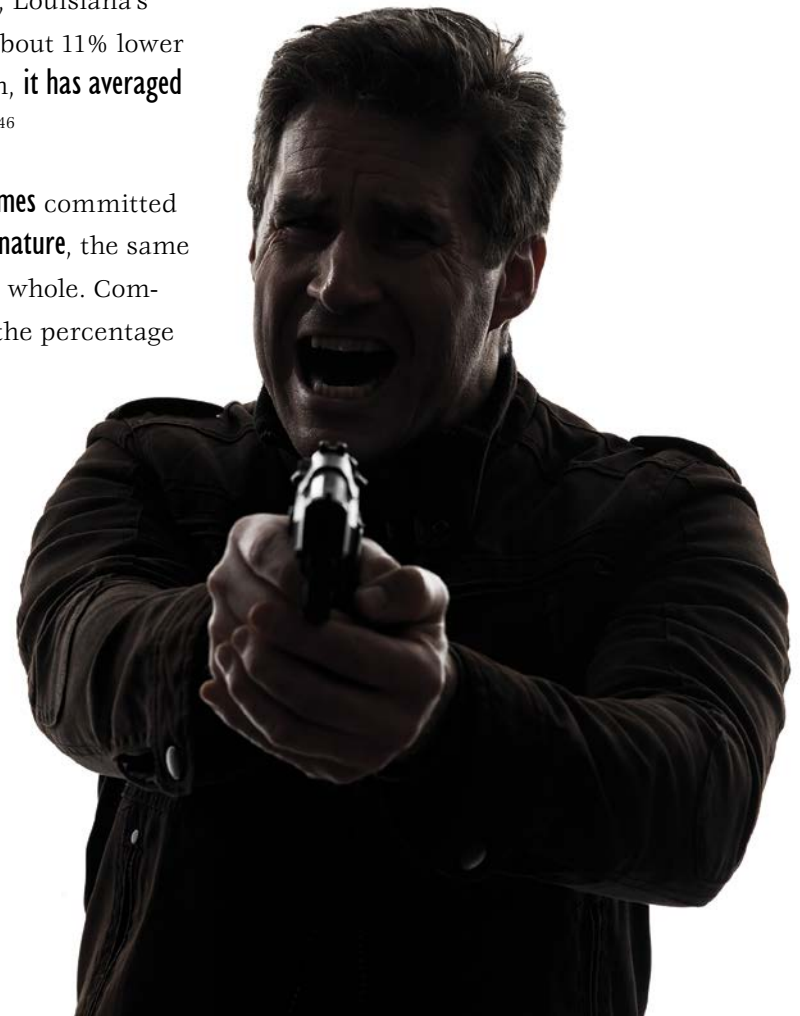
In 2013, Louisiana's **violent crime rate was 510.4 per 100,000 population**, up almost 3% from 2012. Between 1960 and 1963, Louisiana's violent crime rate averaged about 11% lower than national rate. Since then, **it has averaged 24% above the national average**.¹⁴⁶

In 2013, **about 12% of all the crimes** committed in Louisiana were **of a violent nature**, the same percentage as the nation as a whole. Compared to neighboring states, the percentage

of violent crimes in Louisiana was higher than all of the neighboring states (Arkansas: 11%; Mississippi: 9%; and Texas: 11%).¹⁴⁷



Since 1960, the national violent crime rate jumped 371% to its peak in 1991, before descending 51% to its 2013 level of **367.9 violent crimes per 100,000 population**.¹⁴⁸



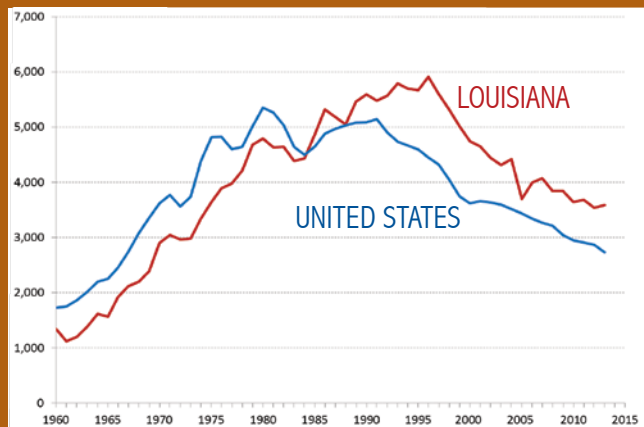
Property Crime



[SNAPSHOT] Until the mid-1980s the property crime rate in Louisiana was below the national average. Louisiana's property crime rate has remained about 20% above the national rate since the mid-1990s.



Property Crimes (per 100,000 population)



In 2013, approximately 165,686 property crimes were committed in Louisiana, or about 279% more than were committed in 1960 (43,709).¹⁴⁹

In 2013, Louisiana's property crime rate was **about 31% above the national average**. From 1960 to 1984, Louisiana's property crime rate stayed below the national average. Since then, it has remained, on average, 20% above the national average.¹⁵⁰

The most common explanation for the surge in Louisiana's property crime rate in the mid-1980s is that it was **related to the spike in cocaine and crack use during the same period**. A need for cash to pay for these new drugs would explain the 20% increase in larceny-thefts from 1984-1989, a 19% increase in burglaries, and a 70% percent increase in (less common) motor vehicle thefts.¹⁵¹

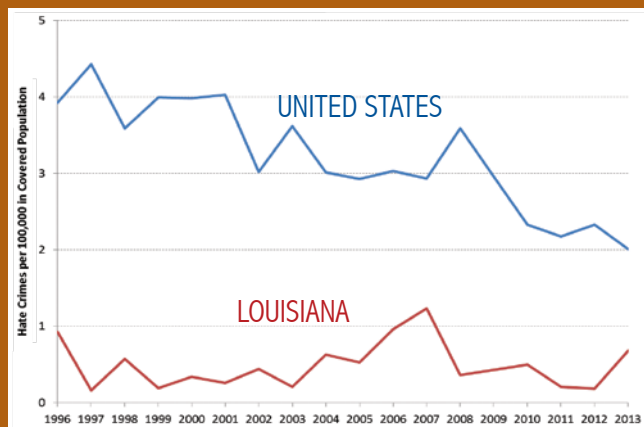
Hate Crimes

According to the FBI, “a hate crime is a traditional offense like murder, arson, or vandalism **with an added element of bias.**” More specifically, “Congress has defined a hate crime as a ‘criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender’s bias against a race, religion, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.’”¹⁵² Because a deliberate motivation must be found between the offender and their criminal activity, the rate of hate crimes in the United States and Louisiana are significantly lower than those of other Type I crimes.



[SNAPSHOT] Hate crimes, as defined by the FBI and Congress, are an extremely small sub-segment of overall crime. The national hate crime rate has declined since the mid-1990s, and Louisiana’s rate is well below the national rate.

Hate Crimes (per 100,000 in covered population)



Unlike other Type I crimes, most—but not every—law enforcement agency participates in the collection of hate crime data. In 2013, approximately 15,000 agencies covering 93% of the nation’s population (295 million residents) submitted hate crime incident reports. Louisiana’s coverage, by comparison, was somewhat smaller (70% of the state’s population; 3.2 million residents), about the same as when hate crime data began to be collected in the mid-1990s.¹⁵³

Since 1996, the rate of hate crimes in Louisiana has **fallen by 27%**. In the same way, the rate of reported hate crimes nationwide has declined by 49%. In 2013, Louisiana reported **23 hate crime offenses**, eight of which involved vandalism or the destruction of property, while another six were classified as assaults.¹⁵⁴ Of these offenses, eight were classified as being motivated by sexual orientation, seven by race, and six by religion.¹⁵⁵

Prison Population

[SNAPSHOT] Louisiana's incarceration rate is highest in the nation, rising dramatically between 1980 and 2000. Consequently, the state's prisons have operated for nearly two decades above capacity.

1st

In 2013, 1 of every 118 persons (0.85%) of Louisiana's population was in a state or federal prison serving a sentence of at least one year, compared to 1 in every 209 (0.48%) of the national population. **Louisiana's incarceration rate**—the number of sentenced prisoners per 100,000 populations—is the highest in the nation.¹⁵⁶

Of the 39,299 prisoners in Louisiana as of December 31, 2013, **94% (37,071) were male**. Less than one percent (23) of all prisoners were under the age of 18.¹⁵⁹ By comparison, 3,092 juveniles were under the supervision of the state's Office of Juvenile Justice, with another 332 in secure OJJ facilities as of March 1, 2015.¹⁶⁰



Since 1980, the sentenced adult prison populations of Louisiana and the nation as a whole have increased by 302% and 228%, respectively. In 1980, Louisiana had 8,889 inmates; at the end of 2013 it had 39,299. Nationwide, the number of prisoners increased from 316,000 to 1.57 million.¹⁶¹

According to the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, of the sentenced prisoners in 2014, 43% were

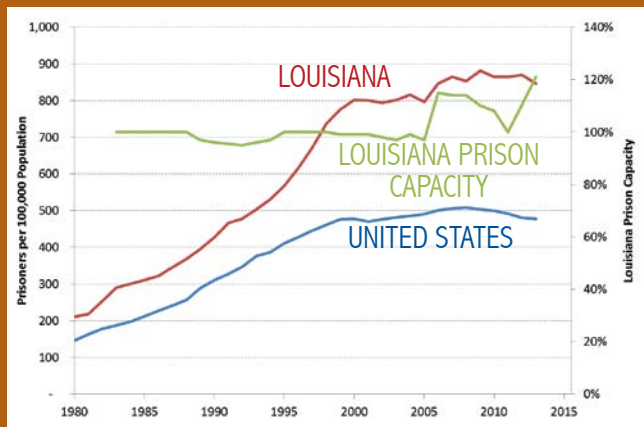


incarcerated for violent crimes, 25% for drug crimes, and 18% for property crimes.¹⁶²

In 2014, approximately 20,299 (52%) adult offenders were housed in local corrections facilities, while 18,763 (48%) were housed in state facilities. About 94% of each group is male.¹⁶³

Among offenders in state corrections facilities, 9,835 (52%) are serving terms of greater than 20 years, life or have a death sentence, as compared to only three percent of local offenders. By comparison, less than four percent of adults in local corrections facilities are serving a sentence of greater than 20 years, and no inmates are being held for either life imprisonment or a death sentence.¹⁶⁴

Prisoners (per 100,000 population)



Cost of Imprisonment



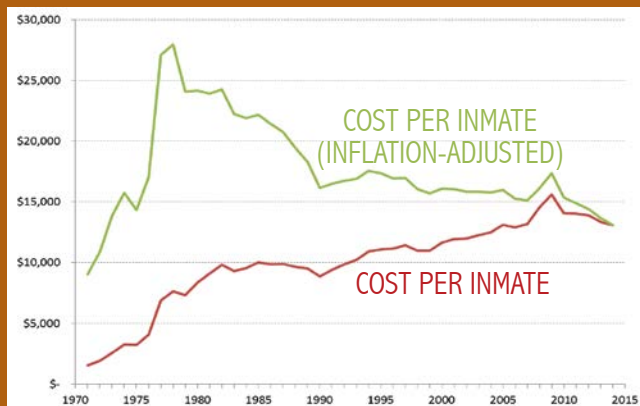
In 2014, Louisiana taxpayers spent approximately **\$13,078 for each of the inmates** in the state's prison system. This is about four percent less than the inflation-adjusted \$13,663 spent per inmate in 2013.¹⁶⁵

Between 1971 and 1978, the cost per inmate in Louisiana's prison system increased 377% from \$1,537 to \$7,643 (a 166% increase in inflation-adjusted dollars, from \$9,043 to \$27,939). From 1978 to 1990, the inflation-adjusted cost per prisoner fell by 42% to \$16,140 (\$8,851 in unadjusted dollars).¹⁶⁶ The only significant spike in imprisonment costs occurred between 2006 and 2009, in

the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Ike, and Gustav, when the state Department of Corrections took in prisoners from local jails that were in the path or the aftermath of these storms.¹⁶⁷

On average, it costs about **\$36 per day to house a prisoner** in Louisiana, but not every prisoner requires the same amount of funding. In state facilities, the average cost is **\$50 per day**, while those in local jails cost only about **\$24 per day**. Inmates in transitional work programs are the least expensive to maintain, costing between \$11.25 and \$15.50 per day.¹⁶⁸

Annual Cost per Prisoner



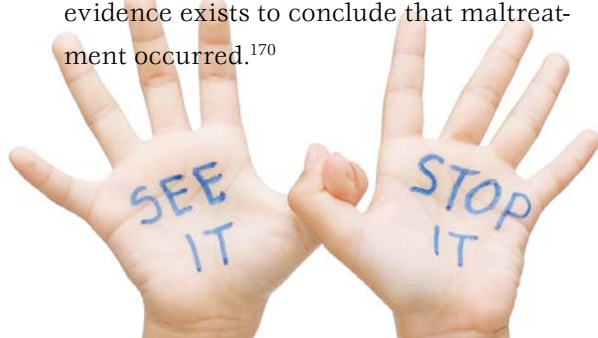
[SNAPSHOT] On average, Louisiana spends \$36 per day per prisoner. In state facilities, the average cost is \$50 per day.

Child Abuse



Since 1991, the rate of substantiated cases of child abuse in Louisiana has declined by 38% and by 35% nationally.¹⁶⁹

In 2012, there were 24,650 reports of child abuse in Louisiana involving 41,068 children. Not every report of child abuse or neglect is authentic; each report must be investigated to determine whether enough evidence exists to conclude that maltreatment occurred.¹⁷⁰



Of the child abuse cases reported in 2012, 8,458 were identified as actual victims—about one in five. Specifically, about one in every 27 children in LOUISIANA was the subject of a child abuse investigation, but only **one in 132 was actually substantiated** as a victim.¹⁷¹



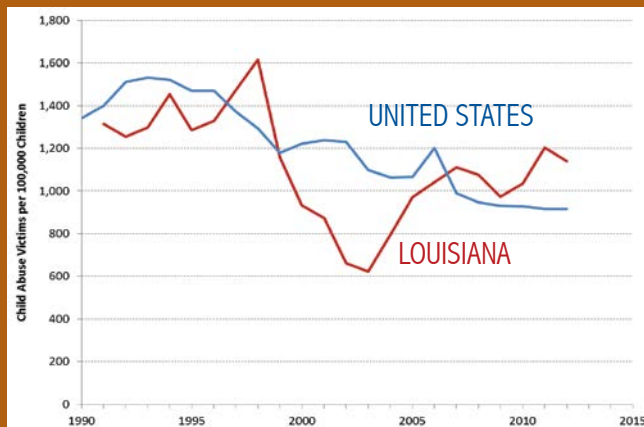
By comparison, about 1 in every 19 children NATIONWIDE was the subject of an investigation, and **1 in every 109 was actually substantiated** as a victim.¹⁷²

In 2012, black and white child abuse victims in Louisiana each constituted 47% of

all child abuse victims, and another two percent were Hispanic.¹⁷³ By comparison, Louisiana's total youth population in 2012 (1,119,124) was 56% white, 38% black, and 5% Hispanic.¹⁷⁴

[SNAPSHOT] The rate of substantiated child abuse cases on Louisiana and in the nation has declined significantly since the early-1990s. The rate of children subject to a child abuse investigation in Louisiana was below the national rate, but the rate of substantiated child abuse cases in Louisiana is about the same as the national rate.

Abuse Victims (per 1,000 Children)



Human Trafficking

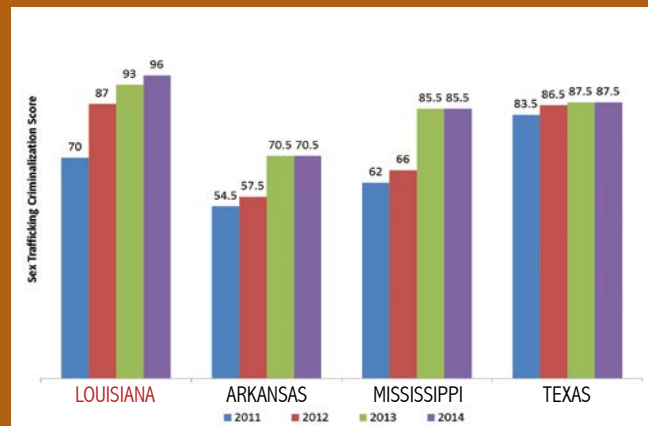


The federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of labor or services, or a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion.” In the case of trafficking for labor or services, persons are subject to “involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery,” while those trafficked for commercial sex acts are under 18 years of age.¹⁷⁵

Since 2011, Shared Hope International has graded the laws of each state as they pertain to domestic minor sex trafficking, providing analyses and recommendations for improvement.¹⁷⁶ In 2014, Louisiana had the highest score in the nation—96 out of a possible 102.5 points—regarding its efforts to eliminate minor sex trafficking. Among Louisiana’s neighboring states, Texas has the best anti-sex trafficking laws, followed by Mississippi and Arkansas.¹⁷⁷

[SNAPSHOT] According to Shared Hope International, in 2014 Louisiana had the highest (best) score in the nation regarding its efforts to eliminate sex trafficking of minors. Sex trafficking of minors is a component of human trafficking.

Sex Trafficking Criminalization

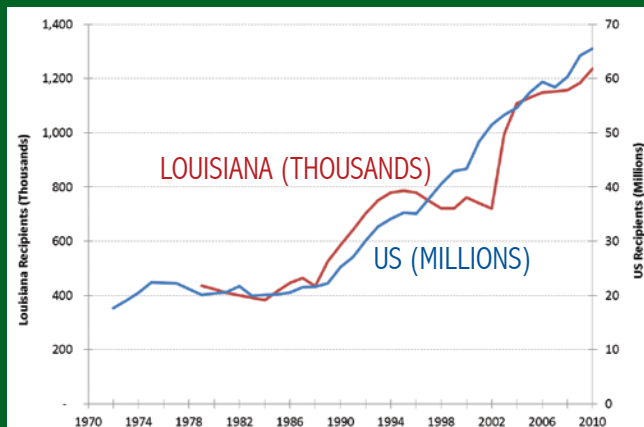


Medicaid Benefits

Begun in 1970, Medicaid pays for medical care and nursing home care for the poor.



Medicaid Benefits Recipients



Since 1980, inflation-adjusted Medicaid spending in Louisiana has increased 400% from \$1.1 billion to

\$5.7 billion in 2010. At the same time, the number of Medicaid recipients increased 192%, from 423,000 to more than 1.2 million.¹⁷⁸

Much of the growth in Medicaid occurred in the last 10 years. From 2000 to 2010, the number of recipients increased 63% in Louisiana and 51% nationwide. At the same time, inflation-adjusted spending on Medicaid increased 109% in Louisiana and 73% for the rest of the nation.¹⁷⁹

In 2010, approximately 65.5 million Americans received some level of Medicaid assistance, the total, inflation-adjusted cost of which was approximately \$362 billion. Of this amount, \$49 billion was spent on nursing home care, \$38 billion was spent on inpatient hospital expenses, and \$26 billion was spent on prescription drugs.¹⁸⁰



[SNAPSHOT] Inflation-adjusted spending in Louisiana on Medicaid has increased five-fold since 1980. At the same time, the number of people receiving Medicaid benefits in Louisiana increased three-fold to over one million. From 2000 to 2010, the number of recipients and the inflation-adjusted amount spent for Medicaid in Louisiana increased at a greater rate than nationally.

Medicare

Medicare was established in 1965 as a means of establishing a health insurance program for aged persons to complement the retirement, survivors, and disability insurance benefits under Title II of the Social Security Act. When it was implemented in 1966, Medicare covered most persons aged 65 or older. Since then, it has expanded to include persons entitled to Social Security or Railroad Retirement disability cash benefits, most persons with end-stage renal disease, and those with Lou Gehrig's disease.¹⁸¹



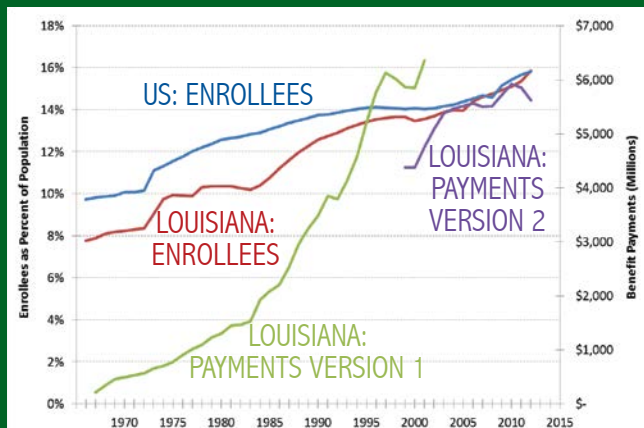
Since 1966, enrollment in Medicare in **LOUISIANA** has risen from 7% of the state's population (276,000) to almost 16% (729,000) in 2012, **an increase of 104%.**¹⁸²



NATIONALLY, enrollment has risen from 10% to 16%, **an increase of 63%.**¹⁸³

[SNAPSHOT] The percentage of Louisiana's population enrolled in Medicare has doubled since 1965, a pace greater than the national average. Direct comparisons on Medicare spending before 1999 and after 1999 are not possible due to changes in reporting methodologies, but Medicare spending in Louisiana and nationally has clearly and dramatically increased since its inception.

Medicare

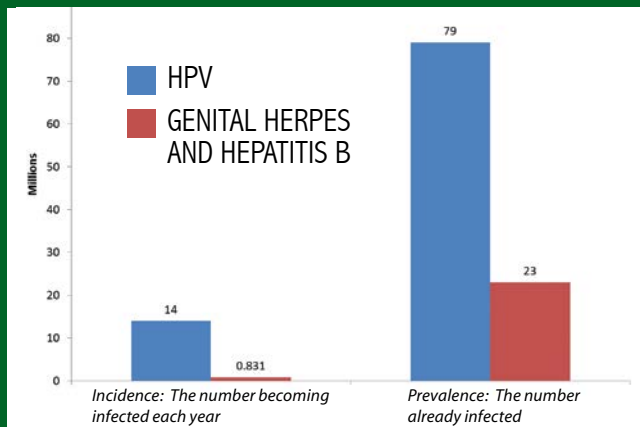


Viral Sexually-Transmitted Diseases



[SNAPSHOT] About 79 million people in the U.S. are currently infected with HPV and each year 14 million people develop new infections.

STD Cases (per 100,000 population)



Approximately 20 million Americans develop a sexually transmitted disease (STD) each year, of which **about half occur in 15- to 24-year-olds**.¹⁸⁶ Several viral STDs—genital herpes, hepatitis B and C, and HIV/AIDS—have no cure, meaning individuals who acquire them will likely have to manage them the rest of their lives.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common of all STDs.¹⁸⁷ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 79 million Americans are infected with HPV—its “prevalence”—with another 14 million becoming infected each year—its “incidence”.¹⁸⁸ As with many other STDs, HPV has no cure, but many HPV infections disappear on their own within the first six months of infection.¹⁹⁰

HPV’s name is derived from the group of more than 150 related viruses that can cause warts (papillomas) and cancer, particularly cervical cancer. HPV has also been linked to about 75% of vaginal cancers; 69% of vulvar cancers; 63% of penile cancers; 91% of anal cancers; and 72% of oropharyngeal cancers—that is, cancer in the back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils.

Every year, 17,000 females and 9,000 males develop cancer related to HPV.¹⁹¹

Estimates of the cancers associated with HPV come from the National Program of Cancer Registries for the years 2006-2010. Among females in **LOUISIANA**, cervical cancer is most likely to be related to HPV (8.04 to 9.54 per 100,000 population),¹⁹² while oropharyngeal cancer is the most common manifestation of HPV among males (7.11 to 8.52 per 100,000 population).¹⁹³ The lifetime cost of treating the 14 million new cases of HPV each year and their related cancers is **\$1.7 billion per year**.¹⁹⁴

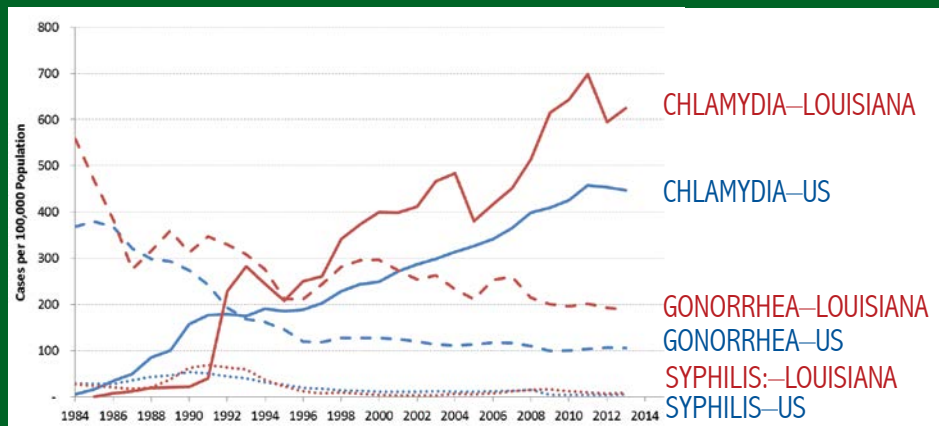
Genital herpes infects about 776,000 Americans per year, with another 15.5% of the population between ages 14-49 (about 23 million) estimated to already be infected.¹⁹⁵

If untreated, genital herpes can cause painful genital sores. Among pregnant women, it can lead to miscarriages, premature deliveries, and potentially passing the virus to the unborn child, which can lead to a deadly infection (neonatal herpes).¹⁹⁶ The lifetime cost of treating the new cases of genital herpes each year and their related complications is **almost \$541 million per year**.¹⁹⁷

Bacterial Sexually-Transmitted Diseases

[SNAPSHOT] Reported cases of chlamydia, the most common bacterial STD, were almost non-existent in Louisiana in 1985 and now number over 600 per 100,000 population. The increase in reported infections is due in part to improved screening tests. Louisiana now has the second highest rate of chlamydia in the U.S., the highest rate of gonorrhea, and the third highest rate of syphilis.

Bacterial STD Cases (per 100,000 population)



In women, chlamydial infections, which are often non-symptomatic, may result in damage to a woman's reproductive organs, including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)—a major cause of infertility—ectopic pregnancy, and chronic pelvic pain. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chlamydia infects almost 1.4 million Americans per year¹⁹⁹ and the lifetime cost of treating the number of new cases diagnosed each year is estimated at \$516.7 million per year.²⁰⁰

2nd

Since 1985, Louisiana's chlamydia infection rate has increased from almost none to 624 per 100,000 population in 2013, while

the national rate has increased 2,500%, from 17 cases per 100,000 population to 447.²⁰¹ One of the reasons for these large increases appears to be because of improvements in screening

techniques.²⁰² In 2013, LOUISIANA had the second highest rate of reported cases of chlamydia in the nation.²⁰³

1st

As with chlamydia, gonorrhea can produce PID, abdominal pain, and ectopic pregnancies.²⁰⁴

Since 1984, the gonorrhea infection rate in Louisiana and the United States has decreased by 72% and 60%, respectively.²⁰⁵ In 2013, LOUISIANA had the highest rate of reported cases of gonorrhea in the nation (188 per 100,000 population).²⁰⁶ The lifetime cost of treating the 270,000 new cases of gonorrhea diagnosed each year is approximately \$162 million per year.²⁰⁷

3rd

Syphilis is a bacterial infection that is particularly dangerous to unborn children. If untreated,

many children of mothers with syphilis are stillborn or die shortly after birth.²⁰⁸ The reported rate of cases of syphilis has fallen by 81% in LOUISIANA and by 62% NATIONWIDE since 1984. In 2013, LOUISIANA had the third highest rate of reported cases of syphilis in the nation (9.2 per 100,000 population).²⁰⁹ The lifetime cost of treating the new cases of syphilis diagnosed each year is approximately \$39 million.²¹⁰



Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection (HIV) is a disease of the immune system. While the disease can be managed through antiretroviral therapy, which can help patients achieve near-normal life expectancies, **there is no cure for HIV.**²¹¹ If left untreated, about half of all persons with HIV eventually develop Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) within 10 years of infection.²¹²

3rd

In 2012, there were 47,989 diagnoses of HIV infection in the **50 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.**

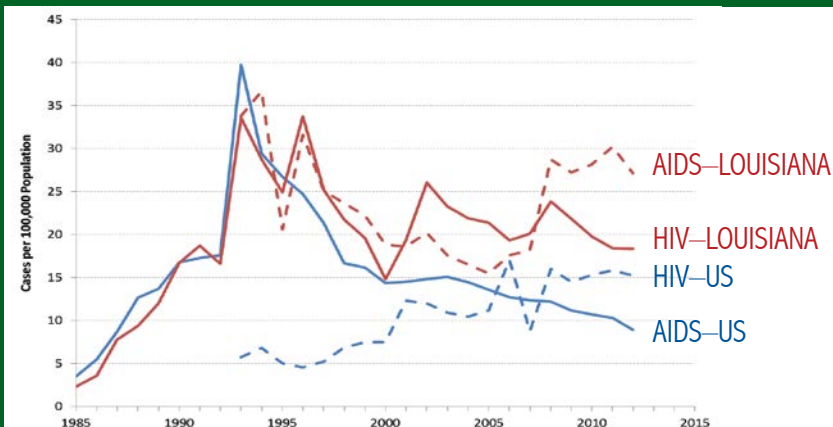
Of these, 1,247 were reported in **LOUISIANA.** The rate of HIV infection in 2012 was 15.3 diagnoses per 100,000 population nationally and 27.1 in **LOUISIANA,** giving the state **the third highest infection rate in the nation.** Since 1993, the HIV infection rate has increased 165% nationwide and **declined by 20% in Louisiana.**²¹³

In 2012, the most common age for new diagnoses of AIDS was 20-24 years old (36.3 per 100,000 population), followed by 25-29 year olds (35.5 per 100,000 population).²¹⁴



Among males, most came into contact with HIV via male-to-male sexual contact (68%), injection drug use (10%), or both (7%). For females, the primary sources of infection are from heterosexual contact with HIV positive men, including bisexual men (73%) and injection drug use (24%).²¹⁵

HIV / AIDS Cases (per 100,000 population)



[SNAPSHOT] Louisiana has the third highest rate of HIV infection in the U.S., despite a 165% increase in infection rates in the U.S. and a 20% decrease in Louisiana from 1993 to 2012.

State and Local Budgets

While only a couple of indicators are explicitly identified as related to “business,” many of them have a direct bearing on the overall economic health of the state. Median household income, for example, is a good gauge of the economic well-being of Louisianans, as it documents their ability to afford housing, transportation, education, and health care. Conversely, this study’s measures of poverty chronicle the numbers of state residents who need assistance from the government and elsewhere. Academic attainment has a less immediate but a no less profound influence on Louisiana’s economy, as it tracks the job readiness of the state’s youth as they move from schooling into the workforce. Other education measures such as the ACT, SAT and NAEP provide Louisiana with the means to measure the competitiveness of its students against those in other states.

In fiscal year 2014, Louisiana’s combined state and local expenditures **totaled \$48.1 billion**, up 63% since 1992 on an inflation-adjusted basis.¹¹⁹

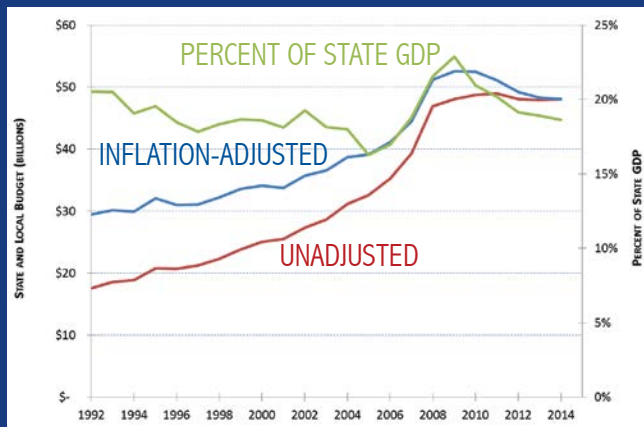
In 1992, Louisiana’s combined state and local budget of \$17.6 billion equaled about 20% of the state’s gross domestic product (GDP) of \$85.7 billion. By 2014, the budget of \$47.9 billion was **19% of the state’s GDP of \$257.9 billion**.¹²⁰

In 2014, the **three largest components** of Louisiana’s state and local budgets were **education (30%)**, **health care (22%)**, and **public safety and corrections (8%)**.¹²¹



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State and Local Budget



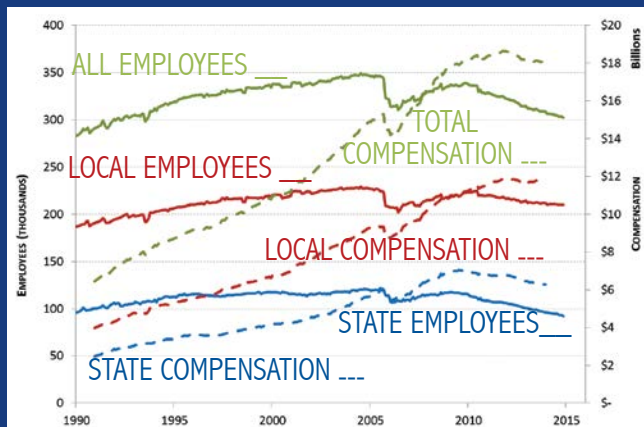
[SNAPSHOT] The combined state and local “inflation-adjusted” budgets in Louisiana rose 63% from 1992 to 2014 but were a slightly lower percentage of state GDP in 2014 than in 1992. Education, health care and public safety & corrections represent about 60% of total costs.

State and Local Employees



[SNAPSHOT] The number of state and local employees rose by 7% between 1990 and 2014 but has been declining since 2010. All of the growth since 1990 came from local government employees, with state government employment decreasing by 4% during that time.

State and Local Employees



Since 1990, Louisiana's population has increased by about nine percent. At the same time, the numbers of state government employees have decreased by four percent, while the number of local government employees has increased by 12%.²¹⁶

In November 2014, Louisiana had a total of **302,000 state and local government workers**. Of these, 92,300 were state employees and 209,700 were local. Local government employees include teachers

and other public education employees.²¹⁷

Since 1990, the amount of money spent on the compensation of state and local employees (including salary, wages, and benefits) has risen by 180%, from \$6.4 billion to **\$18.1 billion in 2013**. Most of this growth has come from local employees, whose total compensation has almost tripled (1990: \$4 billion; 2013: \$11.9 billion). By comparison, state employee compensation rose 153%, from almost \$2.5 billion in 1990 to \$6.3 billion in 2013.²¹⁸

Unemployment

[SNAPSHOT] With two notable exceptions, unemployment in Louisiana follows a similar pattern as the U.S. as a whole. As of late 2014 Louisiana's rate was slightly above the U.S. rate.

Unemployment in Louisiana closely mirrors the total U.S. and is generally below the national rate, with two exceptions. In the mid-1980s, a dramatic drop in crude oil prices resulted in a collapse of the oil industry and state unemployment rates were the highest in the nation. In 2005, another spike in unemployment occurred as a result of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina.

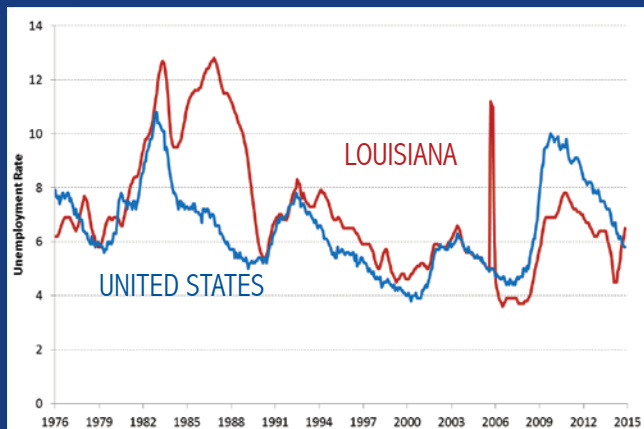
As of November 2014, preliminary data showed Louisiana with an **unemployment rate of 6.5%**, 0.7 percentage points higher than the national average of 5.8%.²²²

Since the fall of 2007—when Louisiana's employment rate was 3.7%—the rate has climbed 76% at the state level and 16% at the national level.²²³

Between November 2013 and November 2014, preliminary data show that Louisiana gained 59,000 jobs, for a total of 2.04 million jobs.²²⁴

The sectors with the greatest gains were professional and business services (4.0%), construction (3.7%), and education and health services (2.0%), while the largest losses were in information (-4.4%) and government (-2.0%).²²⁵

Unemployment Rate



Gambling Dollars

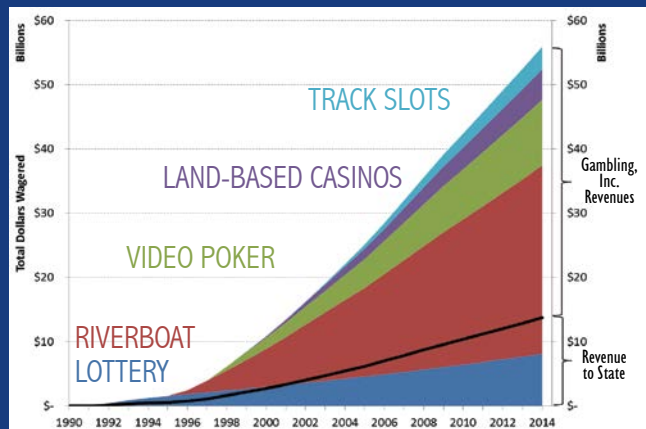


Since 1991, more than \$54 billion has been wagered—and lost—by gamblers in all types of gambling venues across the state, though it is uncertain how much of that amount was lost by the people of Louisiana. Of this amount, **\$13.1 billion in revenue has been realized by the state and in communities with gambling venues.**²²⁶ It should be noted that the amount of revenue realized by each of these venues does not include revenue from other on-site, non-gambling options such as hotels, restaurants, golf courses, and so forth.

Since 2002, riverboat gambling has been the source of an average of 45% of the state's gambling revenue, followed by video poker (23%), the lottery (17%), land-based casinos (9%) and track slots (6%).²²⁷

A 2011 Baylor University study examined the social costs of pathological gambling in several states, including Louisiana. Considering social costs such as crime, business and employment costs, bankruptcy, illness, family costs (divorce/separation), and other costs, the study estimated that it costs \$9,393 for each problem gambler. That equates to **nearly \$1 billion dollars in costs per year due to problem gambling** in the state of Louisiana alone. It should be noted that this figure represents only economic factors: it does not measure the heartache and costs to families due to addictive gambling habits.²²⁹

Gambling Dollars/Revenue to the State



According to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, problem gambling is a hidden addiction affecting thousands of Louisiana families. A 2008 Louisiana study on problem gambling revealed **as many as 100,000 Louisiana residents are problem or pathological gamblers.**²²⁸

[SNAPSHOT] Since the state lottery was instituted in 1991, four other forms of gambling were added and riverboat gambling now accounts for nearly half of all state revenues from gambling. Problem gambling carries a cost to the state and to local municipalities, with some estimates indicating the cost of problem gambling in Louisiana is nearly **\$1 billion per year.**

References

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Remove the space and
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<http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>.

To illustrate, the space is show in the line below. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

For the URL to be directed correctly, this space must be located after pasting the URL in your browser and manually deleted. The offending space will be located where the line breaks.

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Points to Consider

All Roads Lead to Family.

The statistical proof is overwhelming.

“One of the most consistent predictors of whether an individual will become involved in a crime is family disruption.”

Health & Family

Family structure plays a major role when it comes to overall physical health. According to a 2009 study conducted by Mary Elizabeth Hughes at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Lindar J. Waite at the University of Chicago, people who get married and stay married tend to have better health than those who have never married. At the same time, those who have ever been divorced have worse health in terms of depression, mobility limitations, and chronic conditions.¹

Marriage has a significant and positive effect on mortality rates. According to a review of the literature by medical students at Cardiff University in Wales, mortality rates are generally 10% to 15% lower among married adults in seven European countries. The researchers credit the effect of marriage as “a positive influence on lifestyle,” which leads to both better mental health and longer life.²

Crime & Family

One of the most consistent predictors of whether an individual will become involved in a crime is family disruption, according to a 2005 meta-analysis of over 200 studies by criminal justice professors Travis Pratt of Washington State University and Francis Cullen of the University of Cincinnati.³

Similarly, children raised in single-parent homes are more likely to commit crimes. Single-parents, especially single mothers, possibly expect less of their children, spend less time monitoring them, and use less effective techniques to discipline them.⁴

Cohabitation & Family

More than half of all marriages today are preceded by cohabitation.⁵ While couples who cohabit before marriage tend to believe they are improving their chances for marital success, a number of studies suggest that cohabitation increases the odds of divorce by between 50 percent and 100 percent.⁶ Even among couples that remain married after cohabiting, their quality of life — in terms of marital satisfaction, successful conflict management, and perceived risk of separation — was worse than those who had not cohabited prior to marriage.⁷

Marriages & Family

Even though the national marriage rate may be declining, three of every four marriages started in 1990 and later have made it to their tenth anniversary, and more than half had lasted past their fifteenth anniversary, according to data posted by the U.S. Census Bureau in May 2011. This is good news, considering that children tend to copy the marriage trajectories of their parents.⁸

“ The absence of two married parents in the home is the primary indicator of children living in poverty. ”

Delinquency & Family

Family structure has a significant effect on whether teenagers become involved in substance abuse. According to research examined by The Heritage Foundation, teens in intact families were less likely in their later years to involve themselves in substance abuse than those in single-parent homes.⁹ Other research has found that teenagers in two-parent families had lower rates of smoking and drinking than those in single-parent homes.¹⁰

One of the strongest predictors of sexual activity and pregnancy among adolescent girls is whether their biological father lives in the same house with them. A 2003 study of girls in both the United States and New Zealand found that teen pregnancies were seven to eight times greater among girls whose fathers were absent early in their childhoods and two to three times higher among those whose fathers were not present later in their childhood. These results remained significant even when controlled for differences in family background.¹¹

Girls who begin sexual activity at an earlier age are far more likely to have many sexual partners and are more likely to have abortions. According to a representative sample of 10,000 women between the ages 15 to 44 who participated in the 1995 National

Survey of Family Growth, girls who had voluntary sexual activity at ages 13 or 14 had an average of thirteen or more voluntary non-marital sex partners throughout their lives, while those who began sexual activity in their 20s had, on average, less than three partners. Likewise, nearly 30% of those who became sexually active at age 13 or 14 had an abortion, while only 12% of those who began sexual activity at 21 or 22 had had an abortion.¹²

Wealth and Family

The absence of two married parents in the home is the primary indicator of children living in poverty. According to data from the U.S. Census' 2008 American Community Survey, being raised in a married couple family reduces the probability that a child will live in poverty by about 80%. In 2008, the poverty rate for children living with a single parent was 36.5%, while the same rate for married couples was 6.4%. Some of this effect is due to the fact that single parents generally have less education than married couples, but even when families with identical levels of education are compared, the married poverty rate remained 75% lower.¹³

Marriage is a significant predictor of whether a woman lives in poverty. Women who are or have ever been married are less likely to be poorer than their peers who

“ The median family income of single men is three-fifths of the median married-family income; for single women, it’s two-fifths. Even among single-income married families, the median family income is still higher than that of unmarried individuals. ”

have never married —regardless of people group, family disadvantage, non-marital birth status, or high-school dropout status. The harmful effect associated with a disadvantaged family background is significantly offset by marrying and staying married.¹⁴

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey for 2010, the median family income of single men is three-fifths of the median married-family income; for single women, it's two-fifths. Even among single-income married families, the median family income is still higher than that of unmarried individuals.¹⁵

Like income, net worth is greater on average among married couples than other household types. According to data collected from the Survey of Income and Program Participation, the average net worth of married couples was \$187,100, much higher than cohabitating couples (\$77,000), single-male headed households (\$92,000), and female-headed households (\$48,700).¹⁶

In the same way, children from single parent families are significantly more likely to achieve less in both education and their occupations than those from married-couples.¹⁷

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Core Values

of Louisiana Family Forum



For Life, Marriage, Family and Liberty

Louisiana Family Forum's Mission

To strengthen Louisiana's families through public policy education, issue research, and grassroots advocacy.

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Life. Louisiana Family Forum (LFF) believes that mankind was created in the image and likeness of God and therefore human life is special and sacred. The right to life is the most fundamental of all political rights.

Marriage. LFF believes that marriage and family are fundamental to the basic social order of any civilization and fundamental development of every child. Government has a compelling interest in the definition and preservation of natural marriage as an institution.

Parenting. LFF believes that mothers and fathers must seek to build character and teach children the timeless values which afford success in life. Parents should be active, strategic and loving as they seek to shield the bad influences and build exposure to good influences into their children's lives.

Education. LFF believes that learning is critical to success in life, and that whether parents send their children to public, private, or home-schools, they, and not the state, are ultimately responsible for their child's education. Government should always favor the most local control (i.e., parental control) of schools over centralization.

Religious Liberty. LFF believes that religious liberty is an essential first liberty and it should be defended and protected for all citizens of all faiths.

Commerce. LFF believes that private enterprise, not government, is the engine of economic progress. Only people can create wealth. Government can only redistribute it. Entrepreneurship and hard work should be taught as a positive value and celebrated.

Culture. LFF believes that there are strong relationships between politics, policy, culture and faith. In the same way we need clean air and water, families also deserve a healthy society that treasures life, truth, justice and beauty.

Faith. Believing that God is the author of life, liberty and the family, LFF promotes the Christian worldview as the basis for a just, free and stable society. Religious liberty is one of our first liberties and should be defended for all citizens and all faiths.



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