

STATE OF AMERICAN WELL-BEING

State Well-Being Rankings for Older Americans



The above graphic represents the well-being of older Americans, as measured by the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®. Quintiles are divided by color and larger circles correlate to a higher rank. A gray dot and line indicate any variation from a state's overall total population well-being rank.

State Well-Being Rankings Analysis for Older Americans

“The greatest success of humankind is longer life. The challenge today for families and society is how to live longer, better with the highest state of well-being.”

–Joseph F. Coughlin, Director and Founder, MIT AgeLab

“There are proven and effective interventions that combine social and physical activities to keep people healthy, active and productive as they age. Our research shows that older Americans who are thriving in well-being exercise far more, have less depression, and have lower rates of obesity and chronic illness.”

–Joy Powell, Market President, Healthways Senior Solutions

	Age group:			
	≤54	55 – 64	65 – 74	75+
Fresh produce consumption*	53.9	60.7	63.9	69.9
Exercise (3 to 7 days in the last week)	53.7	49.5	49.3	46.5
Obesity	26.4	33.1	31.8	21.0
Depression	9.6	14.3	11.5	7.4
Smoking	22.3	19.5	12.9	6.5
Learn or do something interesting every day	65.1	63.5	67.5	67.1
Have enough money to do everything I want to do	35.2	41.1	53.3	61.7
Friends and family give you positive energy	76.3	73.0	78.0	80.8
Health insurance coverage	81.1	89.9	97.6	98.1
Have a personal doctor	69.9	89.1	95.2	96.0

Scoring for age groups: ■ High ■ High-mid ■ Mid-low ■ Low

*Eat 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables 4+ days in last week

This report, the fifth in a series, examines the comparative well-being of Americans ages 55 and older. Nationally, older Americans have higher well-being compared to younger adults, and our research reveals that well-being gets better with age. People 75 and older have even higher well-being than those 65 to 74, and they outscore their younger counterparts by a sizable margin.

Older Americans also have higher well-being across each of the five elements of well-being: purpose, social, financial, community and physical. Older Americans score especially high in financial well-being, where they thrive at a rate of 52 percent versus those younger than 55 (32 percent thriving). Older Americans express more satisfaction with their standard of living, worry less about money, and say they have enough money to do what they want to do — all at higher rates than their younger counterparts.

Older Americans also have better access to healthcare than those under the age of 55, with higher rates of having health insurance, a personal doctor, and access to medicine than younger people. Additionally, older Americans eat more fresh produce and smoke less. Although obesity and depression spike for people ages 55 to 64, those 65 and older have lower incidence of obesity and depression compared to people younger than 65.

Where do older Americans have the highest well-being?

Hawaii, Montana, South Dakota, Alaska and Iowa are the top five states for well-being for older Americans. Hawaii leads in community and physical well-being, while New Mexico leads in purpose, Florida in social and North Dakota in financial. There is some consistency between these rankings and the overall state well-being rankings; six of the top 10 and seven of the bottom 10 states repeat in both categories. The lowest well-being states for older Americans are West Virginia, Kentucky and Oklahoma.

Methodology

These data are collected as part of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index® and are based on 173,656 total interviews across all 50 states, conducted from January 2 to December 30, 2014. For those age 55 and older, our sample size is 91,467 in 2014. Our state rankings analysis includes additional interviews from the first quarter of 2015 and spans January 2, 2014 to March 31, 2015, for a total sample size for those 55 and over of 114,388. Gallup conducts 500 telephone interviews a day with American adults, for a resulting sample that projects to an estimated 95 percent of all U.S. adults. The Well-Being Index is calculated on a scale of 0 to 100, where zero represents the lowest possible well-being and 100 represents the highest possible well-being. Visit wbi.healthways.com to learn more.

State Well-Being Rankings for Older Americans

Overall and by Element, 2014 & Q1 2015

Composite Rank						Composite Rank					
	Purpose	Social	Financial	Community	Physical		Purpose	Social	Financial	Community	Physical
1. Hawaii	2	20	7	1	1	26. Washington	38	24	14	36	31
2. Montana	15	38	11	5	3	27. Kansas	27	14	17	30	35
3. South Dakota	4	11	9	4	23	28. Vermont	49	45	19	31	12
4. Alaska	19	32	3	6	34	29. Massachusetts	42	21	22	32	17
5. Iowa	7	18	4	2	25	30. Rhode Island	37	41	40	25	13
6. New Hampshire	34	6	10	12	4	31. North Dakota	44	49	1	28	39
7. Utah	12	22	21	8	15	32. Michigan	26	26	29	41	30
8. Oregon	22	4	12	18	10	33. Maine	48	43	36	15	27
9. New Mexico	1	39	25	27	5	34. Arkansas	17	28	35	10	45
10. Connecticut	21	8	13	42	2	35. New York	39	30	32	45	14
11. Minnesota	20	23	5	19	19	36. Maryland	41	9	33	49	21
12. Colorado	32	29	18	21	7	37. Illinois	33	36	23	50	22
13. Idaho	36	17	15	9	20	38. New Jersey	45	15	39	46	16
14. Nebraska	11	33	16	7	38	39. Missouri	28	37	28	34	41
15. Florida	8	1	31	26	8	40. Georgia	24	16	49	44	37
16. Delaware	6	10	2	33	24	41. Louisiana	13	25	50	24	43
17. Wisconsin	23	34	6	16	18	42. Mississippi	10	19	48	22	42
18. Arizona	14	5	26	35	9	43. Tennessee	31	46	44	14	44
19. Wyoming	46	35	20	3	32	44. Alabama	29	31	46	23	47
20. Virginia	16	7	27	17	33	45. Nevada	50	48	45	48	26
21. South Carolina	5	3	47	11	28	46. Indiana	35	40	24	43	46
22. Texas	3	12	38	20	36	47. Ohio	43	42	30	47	40
23. California	18	27	34	38	6	48. Oklahoma	30	44	37	40	49
24. North Carolina	9	2	43	13	29	49. Kentucky	47	47	41	29	48
25. Pennsylvania	25	13	8	37	11	50. West Virginia	40	50	42	39	50

■ Highest Quintile
 ■ 2nd Quintile
 ■ 3rd Quintile
 ■ 4th Quintile
 ■ 5th Quintile

