

Illinois Commission on Poverty

Name:

Part I: Introductory Reading.

Directions: Use the 5 Ws to annotate as you read the following press release - who, what, when, where, and why. Then, using your annotations and the maps attached, complete the guided questions.

[Pritzker Administration Launches the Illinois Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security to Address Inequality and Poverty Across the State](#)

Press Release - Monday, December 07, 2020 (edited by R. Jihan, April 2025)

Chicago, IL — Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) today announced the Illinois Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security. The Commission, which was signed into law by Governor Pritzker earlier this year as part of the Intergenerational Poverty Act (IPA), builds on the administration's efforts to improve the lives of low- and middle-income Illinoisans. The Commission is tasked with developing and adopting a strategic plan that will develop anti-poverty programs that ensure long-term, multigenerational economic mobility regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation or identity, ability, or geographic location. The plan will be available in spring 2021.

Goals for The Commission outlined in state statute include reducing poverty in Illinois by 50% by 2026, eliminating child poverty by 2031 and eliminating all poverty by 2036.

"No Illinoisan should have to worry about having a safe place to live or where their next meal is coming from," said Governor JB Pritzker. "In the coming years, the newly launched Commission will do the critical work of examining what poverty looks like in Illinois and developing a roadmap that will allow all Illinoisans to live a good life, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or the community they call home."

"The COVID crisis has revealed economic inequity and injustice that has existed within the state for a long time. Before the pandemic, we know that 1.6 million Illinoisans lived in poverty, with 739,000 living in deep poverty. This is inexcusable, and we must address this by ending systems that perpetuate this intergenerational cycle," said Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Grace B. Hou.

The Commission, which is set to meet twice a year, is made up of 25 members: four members of the State General Assembly; one member of the judiciary; and twenty public leaders who represent key constituencies that are impacted by poverty. Members were appointed by the Governor, Senate President, Speaker of the House, Senate Minority Leader, House Minority Leader, and Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. The Commission is Co-Chaired by the President of Heartland Alliance, and the Chief Executive Officer of CRIS Healthy-Aging Center and Mass Transit.

"It is exciting to work alongside leading service system decision makers who are clearly defining the

Bold Promises to End Poverty

Lesson by Rivanna Jihan, a Spring 2025 Pulitzer Center Teacher Fellow



causes of intergenerational poverty amongst people in Illinois. This Commission will implement up-to-date research strategies and bravely change the current design of public service systems in order to ensure that Illinois residents are financially independent and free from poverty," said Amy Susan Brown, Commission Co-Chair and Chief Executive Officer of CRIS Healthy-Aging Center and Mass Transit.

Racism, gender discrimination, and mistreatment of individuals with disabilities is deeply rooted in American culture. The effects of long-standing inequity linger and perpetuate disparities in poverty, housing, criminal justice, and healthcare, among other areas. The Commission's work will be centered in equity and will intentionally confront racist and discriminatory systems that limit economic mobility.

The Commission will be supported by the Interagency Working Group on Poverty and Economic Insecurity that was also created as a part of the IPA. This supportive body is made up of Directors and senior leaders from the following Illinois agencies: Illinois Department of Human Services, Illinois Department of Labor, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department on Aging, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Department of Corrections, Governor's Office of Management and Budget, Illinois Department of Economic Security, and Illinois Housing Development Authority. The Workgroup is meant to serve as an engine that propels the work of the Commission through thought partnership, policy development, and strategy execution.

"While it may seem like a tall order to eradicate poverty, we must think beyond the solutions of the past and hold ourselves accountable for reimagining our state's future," said State Senator Kimberly Lightford (D-4th District).

"I was raised by a single mom who waited tables to keep a roof over our head. From that experience, I feel Illinois' government should be creating opportunities for our residents to improve their circumstances. We should put them in a position to succeed across generations. We need to find the barriers, empower our people, and position Illinois residents for the success that I know they have the potential to attain," said State Representative Jeff Keicher (R-70th District).

"It is an honor to serve as a member of the Illinois Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security and to be a voice for the people of this state currently confronting the daily realities and challenges of living in poverty," said State Senator Dale Fowler (R-59th District). "Sadly, even in the best of times, poverty remains a profoundly serious issue in our state, especially in Southern Illinois where poverty rates remain high. ...It is more important than ever that we do what we can to help those struggling in our state, create opportunities, and support our job creators. "

In addition to developing and adopting a strategic plan, the Commission will hold at least 6 public hearings in different geographic regions of the State to collect information, take testimony, and solicit input from interested parties, including members of the public who have personal experiences with State programs and services.

Part II: Charts and Infographics.

Step 1: As a whole class, skim over the charts on p.4-7 of the [March 2022 Strategic Plan Brief](#). Take notes in the space below about 3-5 details that stand out to you.

Step 2: As a whole class, look at the set of maps of Illinois and Chicago on the following pages. Take notes in the space below about what you see on the maps. Think about similarities and differences between the statistics and information about Southern Illinois and Chicago.

Begin with this [Interactive Map of Income in Illinois](https://iecam.illinois.edu/browse/data/income-where-are-the-highest-and-lowest-incomes-in-illinois)
<https://iecam.illinois.edu/browse/data/income-where-are-the-highest-and-lowest-incomes-in-illinois>

1. What are 3 takeaways you got about the whole state?
2. Zoom in on Chicago - how does the reality of Chicago, up close, compare to the view of the city zoomed out?
3. Zoom in on Southern Illinois - how does the reality of Southern Illinois, up close, compare to the view zoomed out?

Step 3: Using the series of maps on the next pages of Illinois and Chicago, take notes in the space below as you and your partner examine the maps. Think about the similarities and differences between Southern Illinois and Chicago, especially the Southside of Chicago.

Southern Illinois	Southside Chicago

Similarities

Part III: Summarizing Information.

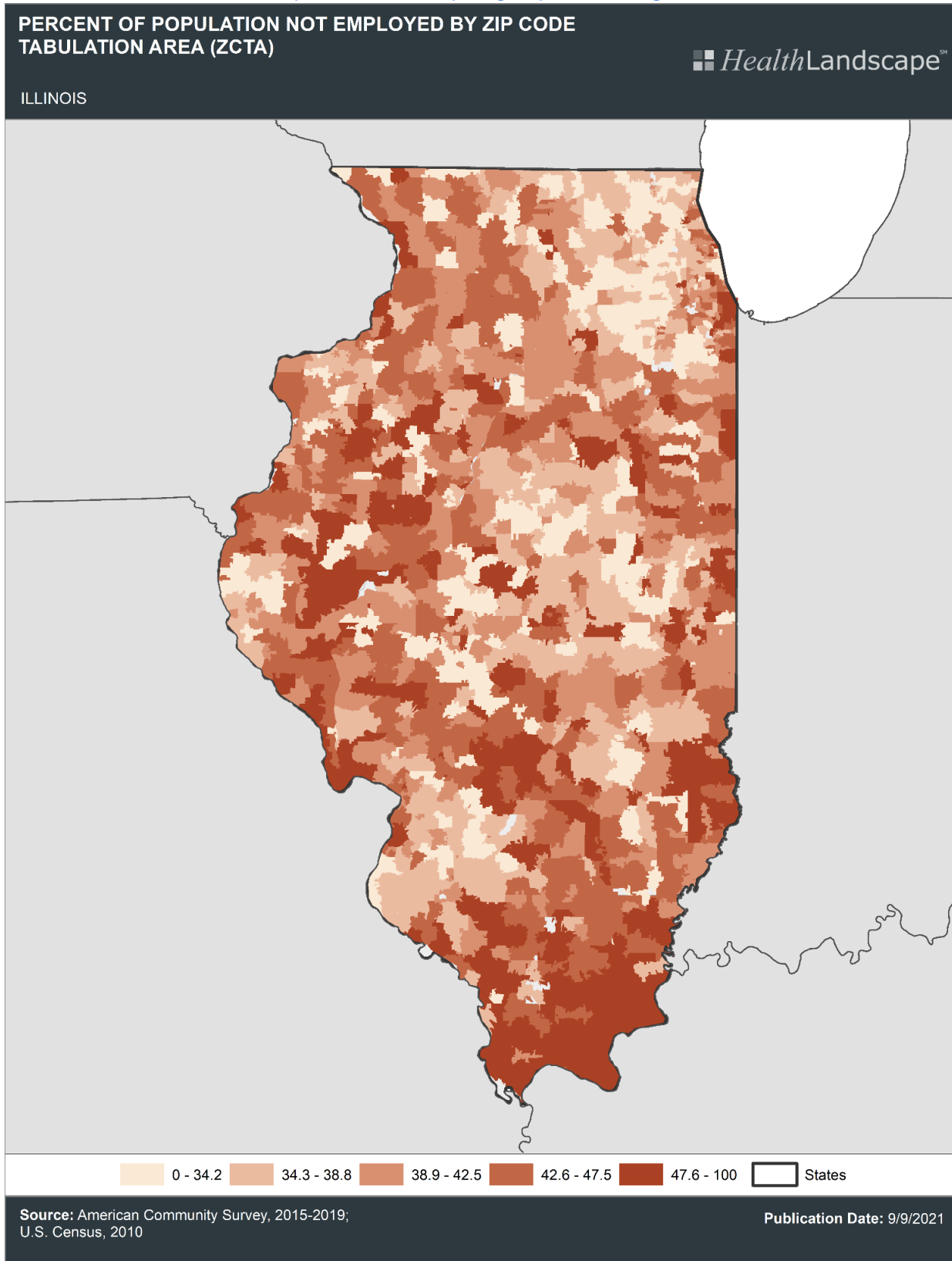
Directions: Once you have read and discussed the press release, the strategic plan, and the maps, answer the questions below in your own words.

1. Who was this press release about, and who will be impacted by the legislation it is discussing?
2. What caused this Commission to be formed, and what is the Commission charged with doing?
3. When was the legislation passed? When is the deadline for meeting the goal of the legislation?
 - a. Do you think the Commission will be able to meet the deadline? Explain your answer.
4. Where will people be impacted by this legislation and Commission? For example, is it only for one county or region of the state, or for the whole state? Do you think this choice of location will impact the ability of the Commission to do its job?
5. Why did so many legislators and the governor support this legislation? If so many people support ending poverty, why do you think the state has not yet been able to do it?
6. Think about the Essential Questions of this unit:
 - “What role does the media play in our understanding of others and ourselves?”
 - “How are different aspects of society handling the impacts of poverty in Illinois (eg, housing, jobs, food deserts, childcare, impact of incarceration, and local politicians)?”
 - “What role does the media, particularly local media, play in our understanding of others and ourselves?”

Then, brainstorm at least 2 inquiry questions that support finding an answer to the Essential Question, and which we can try to answer over the next several days.

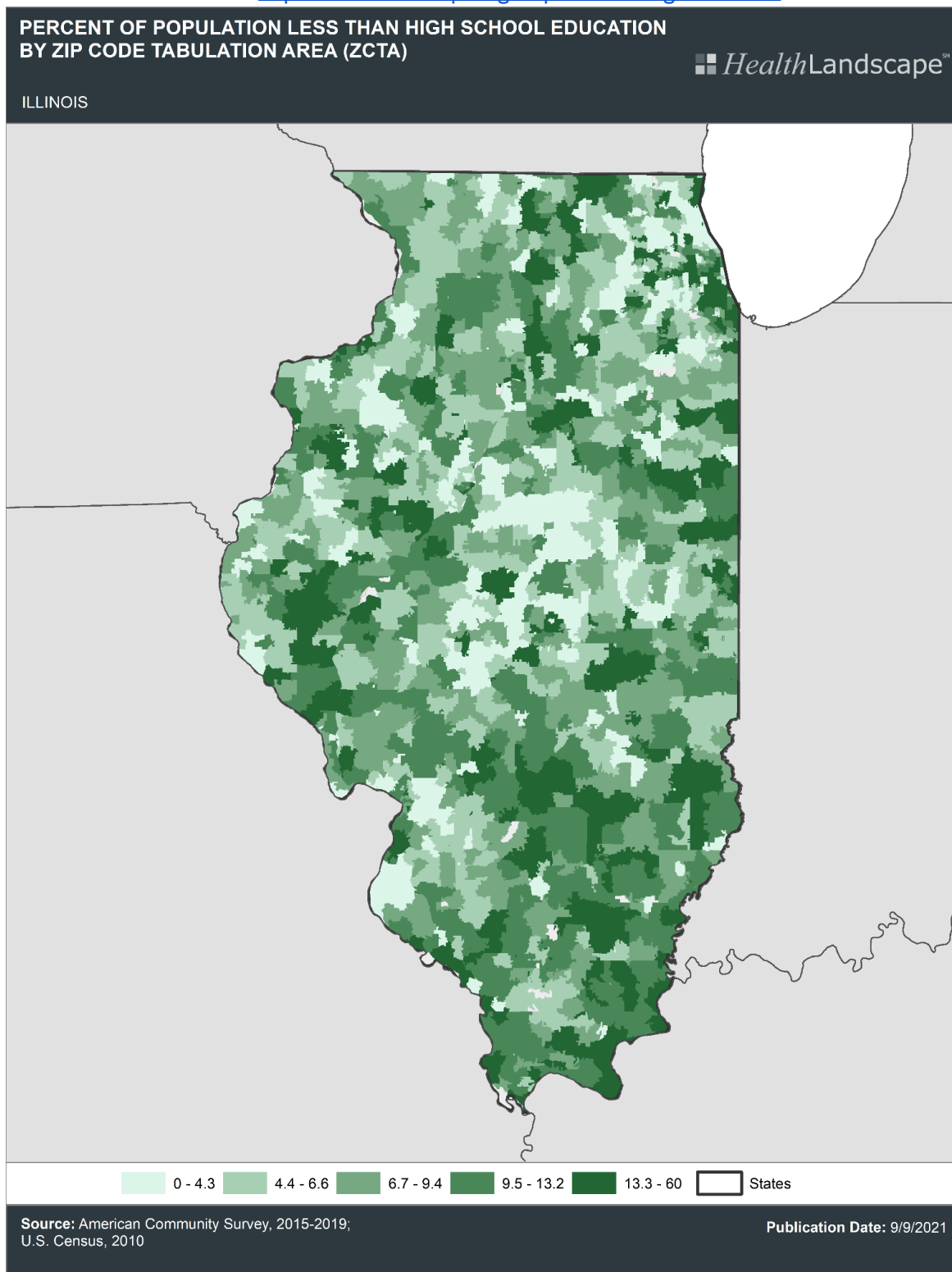
Percent of Population Unemployed, 2015-2019

Source: <https://healthlandscape.org/ilafp-summit/#lg=1&slide=22>



Percent of Population Less Than HS Education, 2015-2019

Source: <https://healthlandscape.org/ilafp-summit/#lg=1&slide=24>

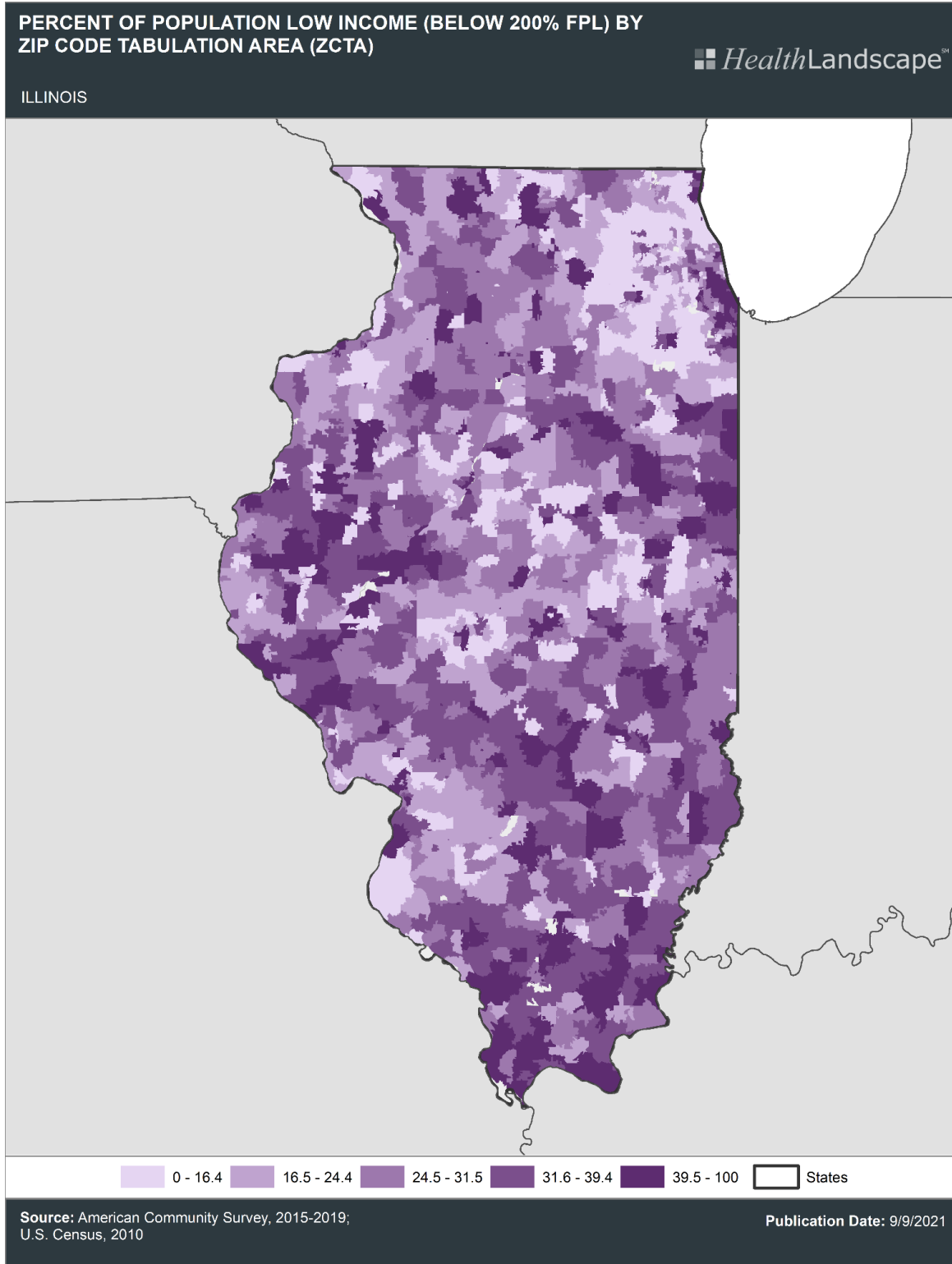


Percent of Population Low Income, 2015-2019

Source: <https://healthlandscape.org/ilafp-summit/#lg=1&slide=23>

Alternative source, that allows for interactive investigation:

<https://iecam.illinois.edu/browse/data/poverty-levels-children-age-5-and-under-by-federal-poverty-level>

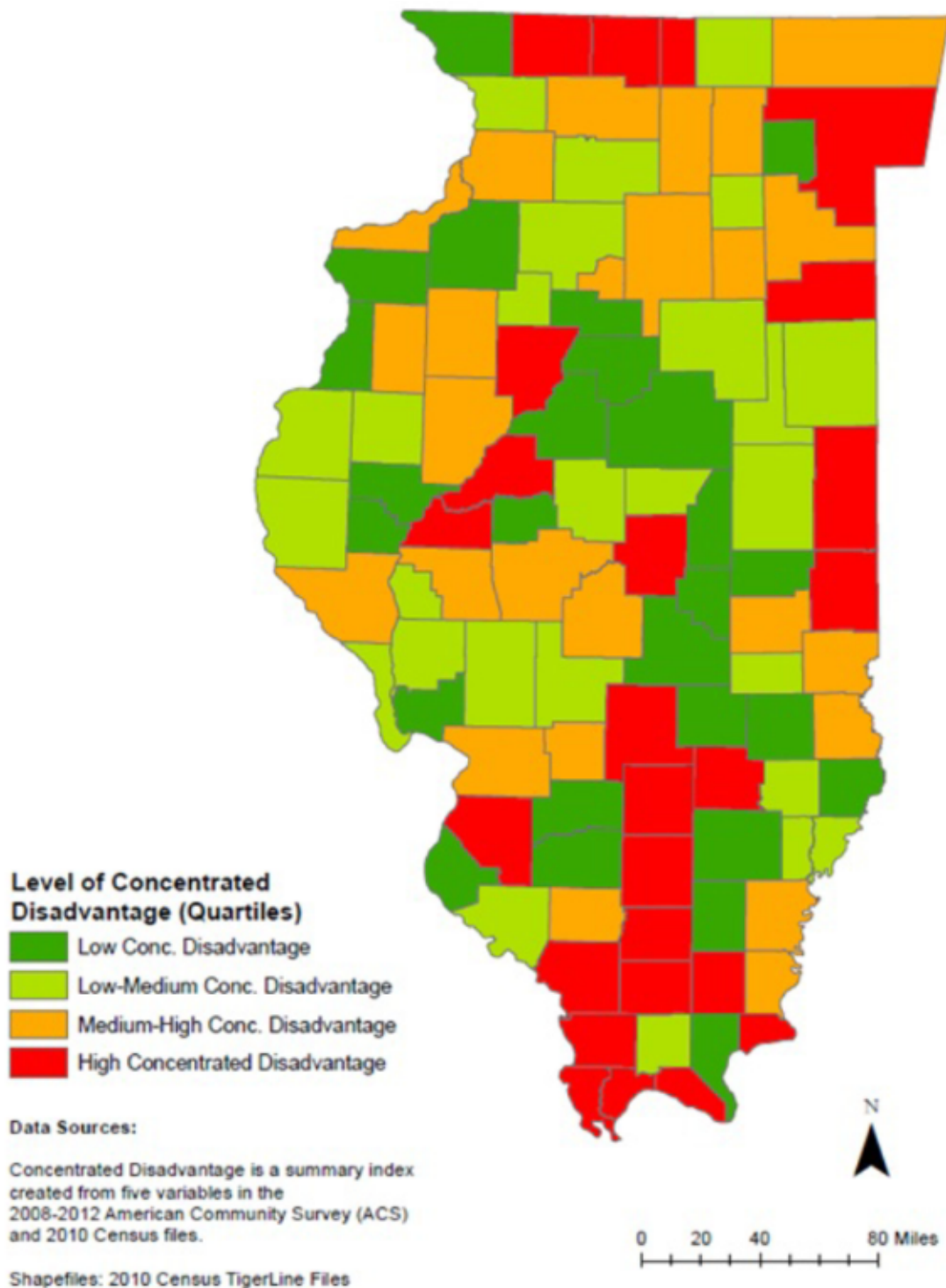


Concentrated Disadvantage, by County, 2008-2012

Source:

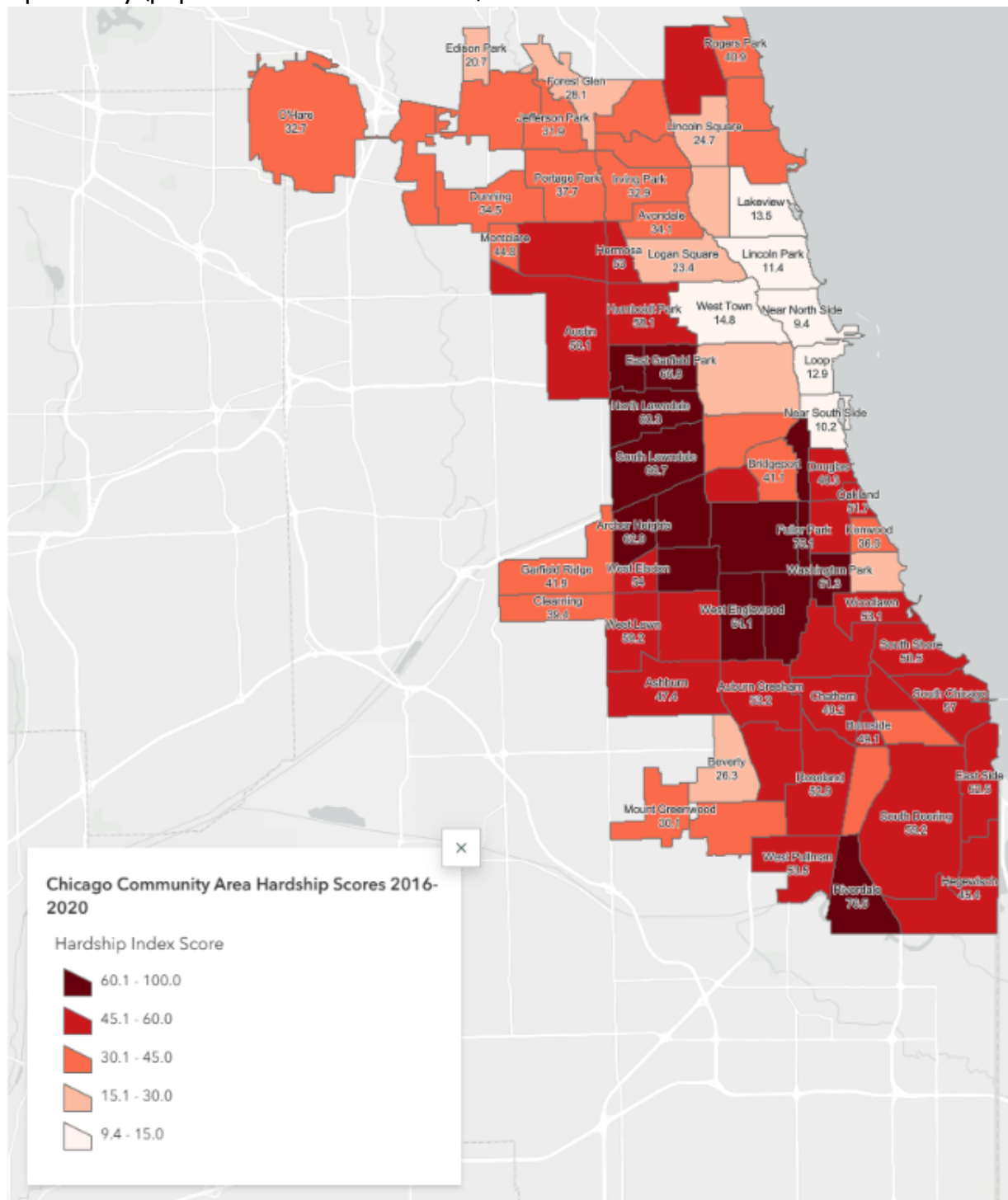
<https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/life-stages-populations/maternal-child-family-health-services/perinatal-health/infant-mortality/toolkit/data.html>

10 Most Disadvantaged Counties: Alexander, Cook, Kankakee, Macon, Marion, Pulaski, Saline, St. Clair, Vermillion, Winnebago

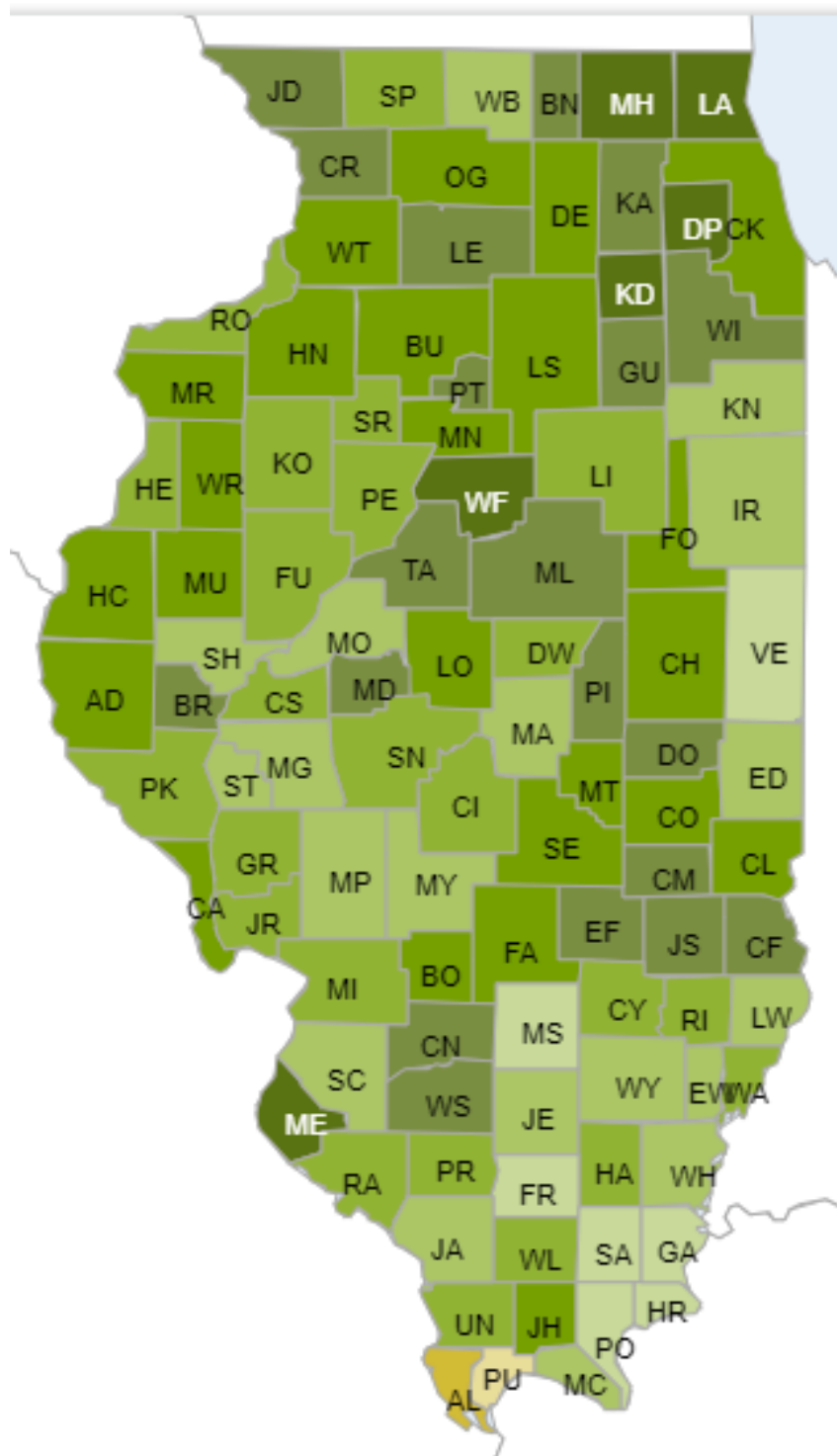


Source: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/da5601c3e0924e5ab3ee07ade9954f7a>

Scores are the average of 6 variables: unemployment (over age 16), education (over 25 without a HS diploma), per capita income level, household poverty, crowded housing (more than 1 person per room), dependency (population over 64 / under 18)



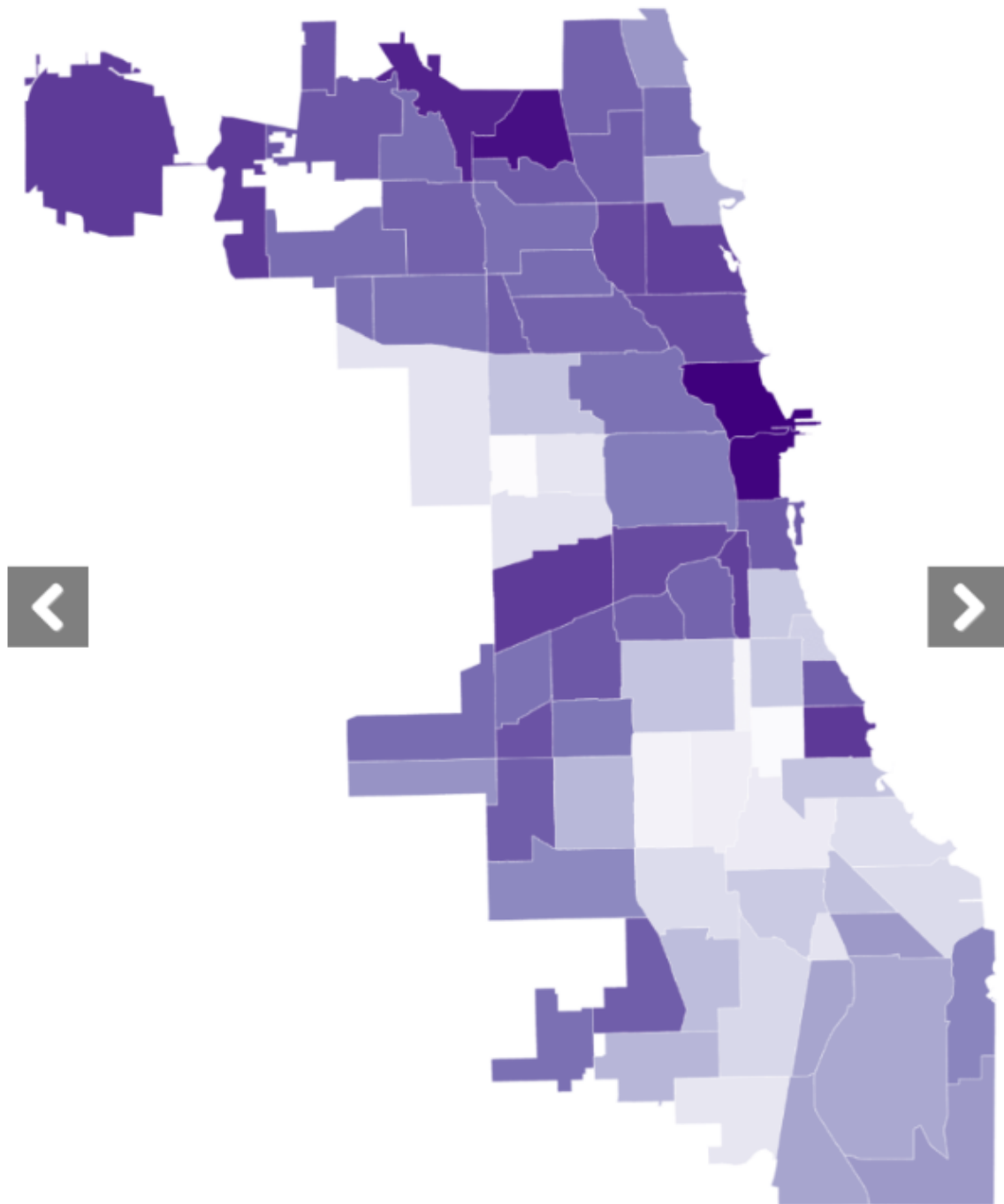
LEAST HEALTHY IN US HEALTHIEST IN US



Life Expectancy in Chicago, 2010

Source: <https://www.chicagomag.com/news/there-is-one-map-of-chicago/>

2010 life expectancy 68.8 years  85.2 years



Sources: City of Chicago; U.S. Census Bureau; Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois Chicago; Chicago Police Department; Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning; Chicago Department of Public Health; Illinois Department of Public Health; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council

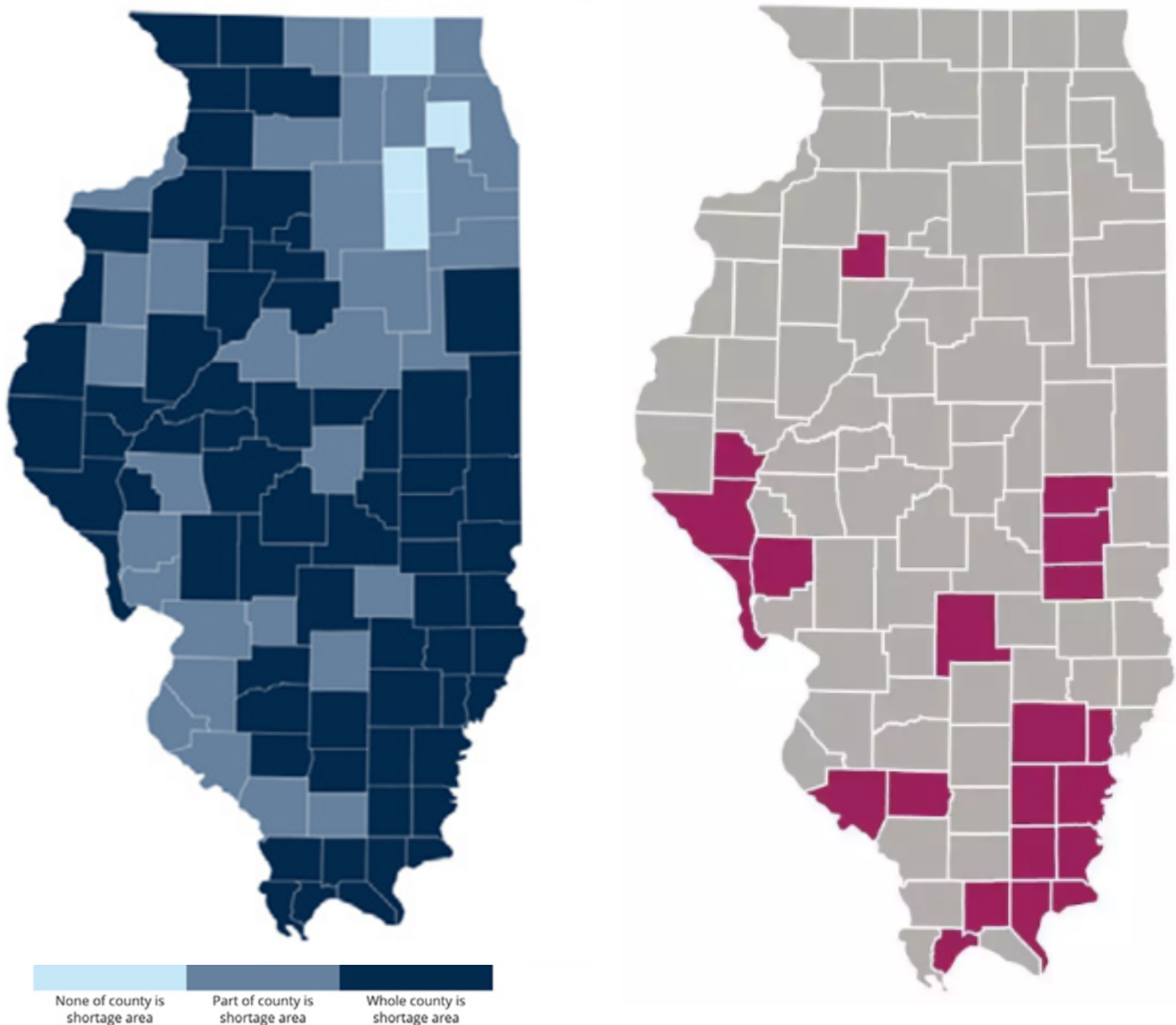
Visualization: Alden Lory/WBEZ

Healthcare Access: Primary Care Providers and Maternity Care (2022-2023)

Source:

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.ilga.gov/reports/ReportsSubmitted/4867RSGAEmail10314RSGAAttachDHS_ILHealthDisparitiesReport_Memo%2020240328.pdf

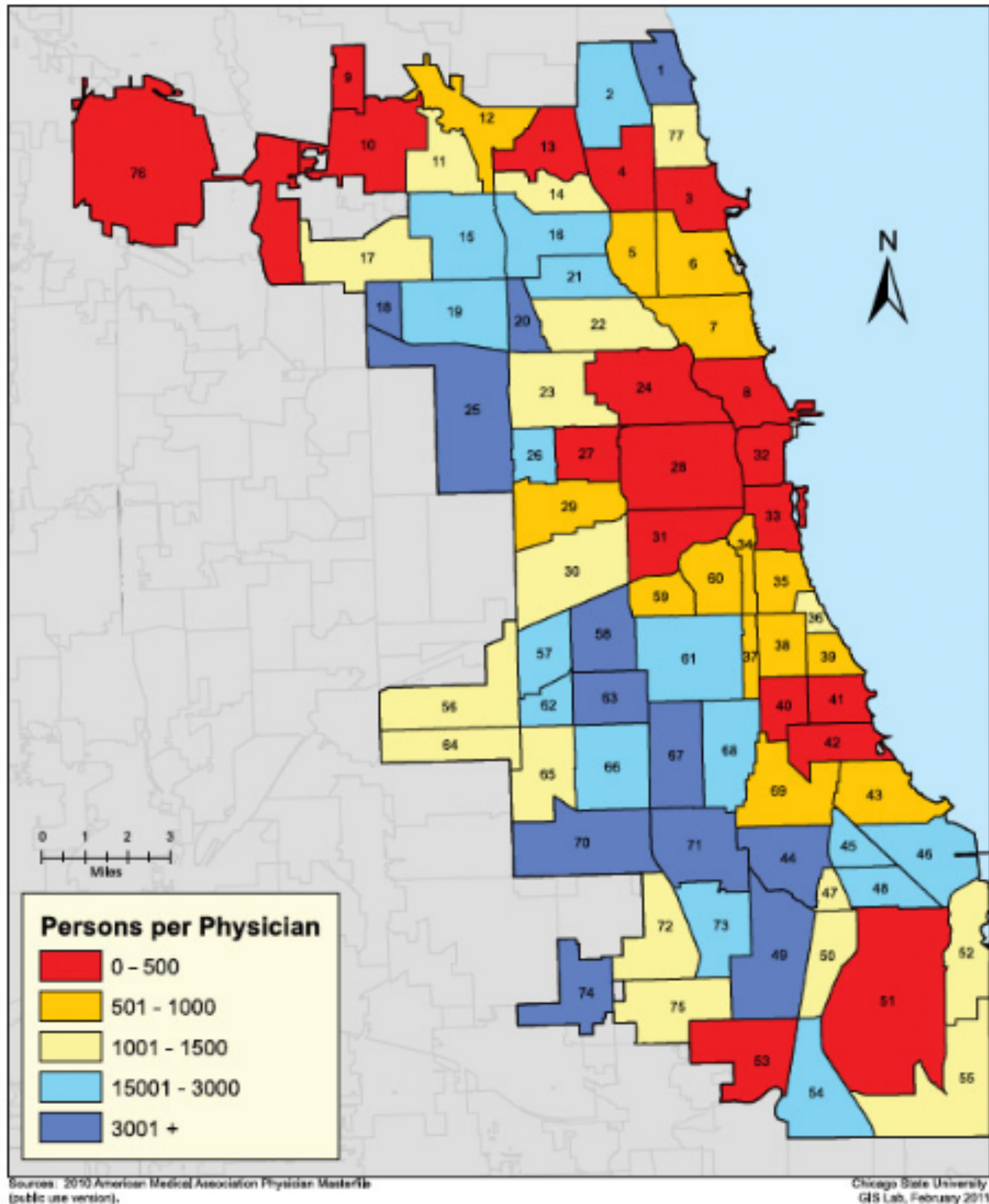
Source: <https://www.thetelegraph.com/news/article/new-report-shows-access-maternal-care-illinois-18329539.php>



Left: Health Professional Shortage Area (Primary Care), 2022; **Right:** Counties Farthest Away from OB Care, 2023

Healthcare Access, Number of People per Physician (2011)

Source: <https://www.chicagomag.com/city-life/april-2012/health-care-and-access-in-chicago-and-throughout-chicago/>



Food Insecurity, 2020

Source:
chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcajpcg|clefindmkaj/https://www.ilga.gov/reports/ReportsSubmitted/4867RSGAEmail10314RSGAAttachDHS_ILHealthDisparitiesReport_Memo%2020240328.pdf

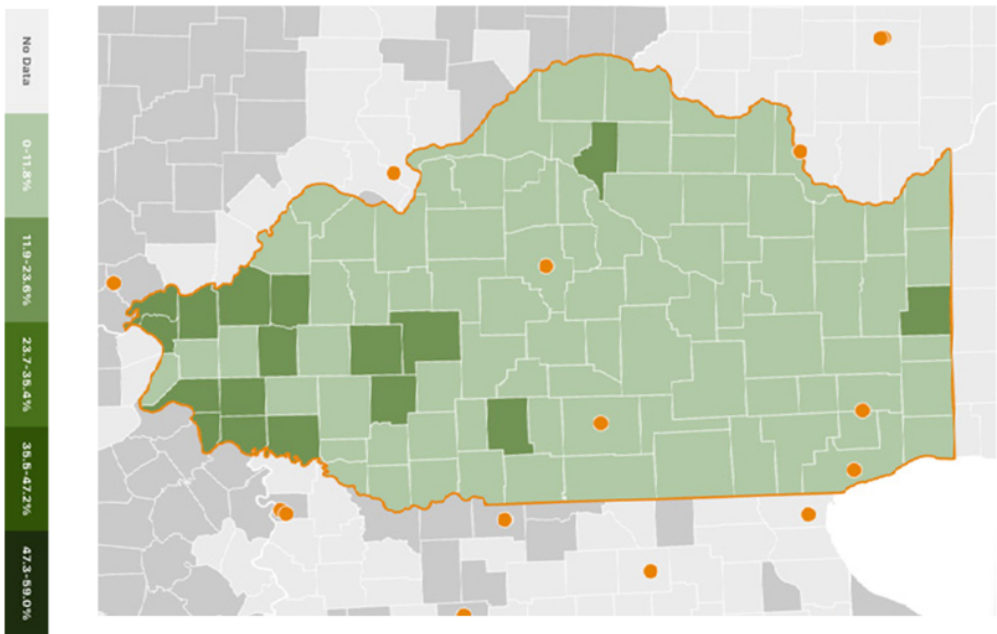


Figure 25. Food Insecurity Among Overall (all ages) Population in Illinois ⁶⁹

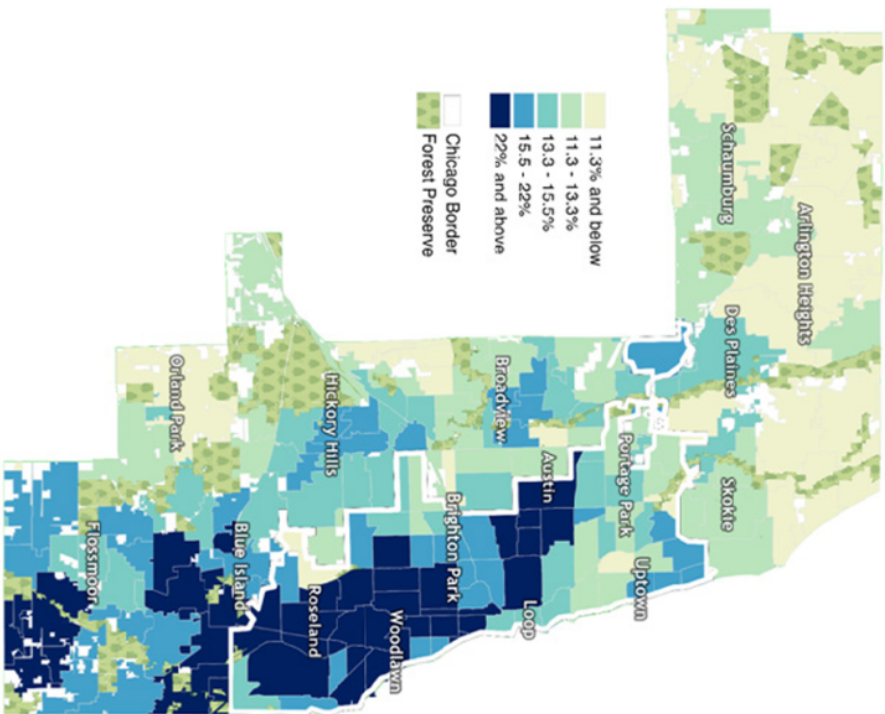
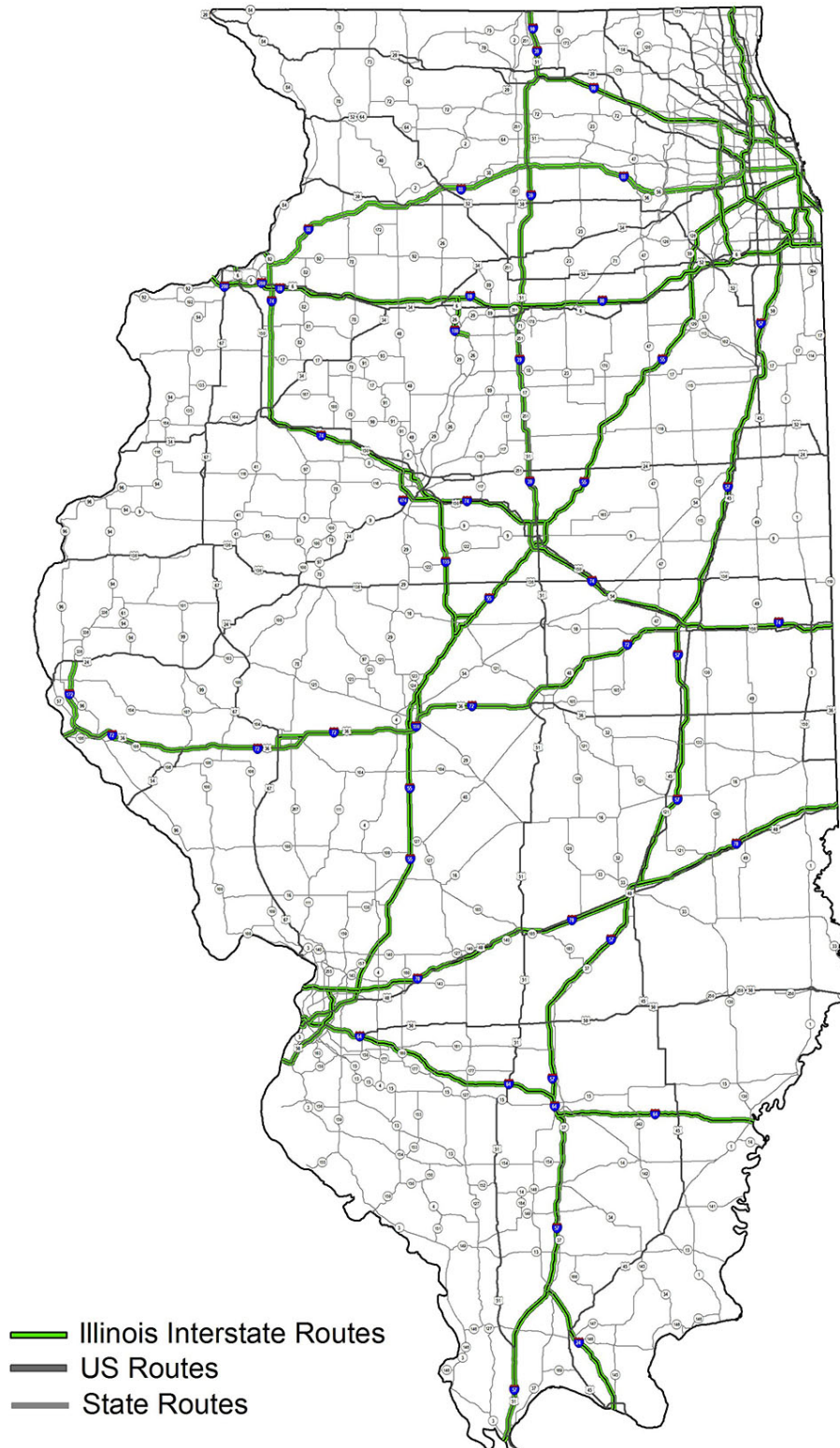


Figure 26. Geographic Distribution of Food Insecurity in Cook County, Illinois (2020). Source: Feeding America (Map the Meal Gap 2020)

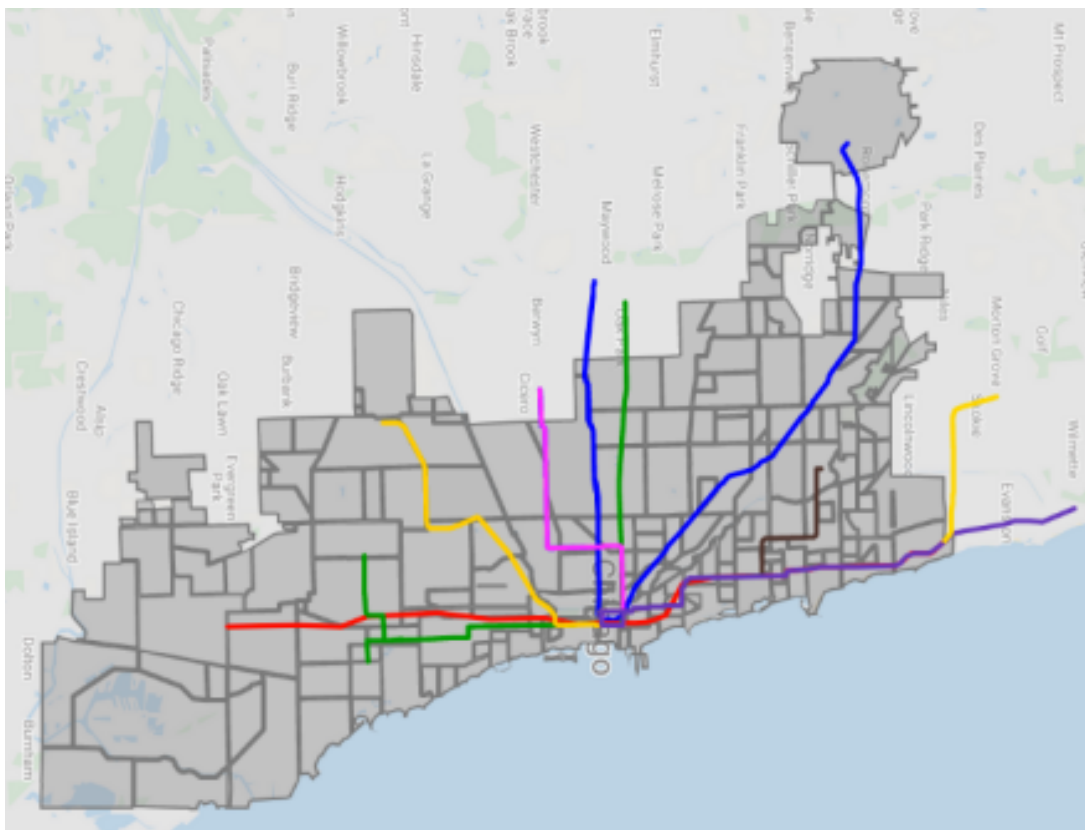
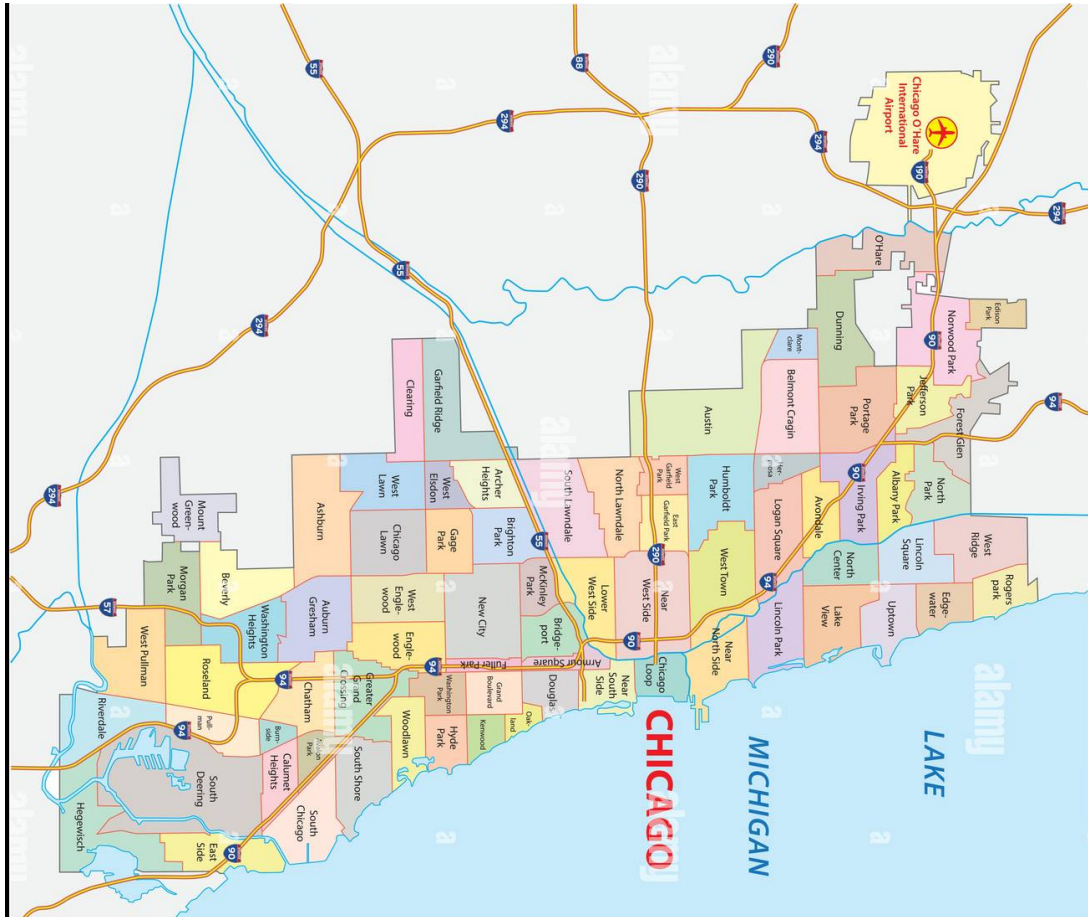
Image: Food Insecurity Among Overall (all ages) Population in Illinois

Illinois Highway System

Source: <https://idot.illinois.gov/transportation-system/network-overview/highway-system.html>



Chicago Neighborhoods and Highways



Media

Source: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.iml.org/file.cfm?key=28672>

Number of Illinois Newspapers by County

December 17, 2024

