Rural Livability in Northern Wisconsin

MAY 7, 2024

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The Rural Livability Project

Part of a USDA-funded Institute for Rural Partnerships housed at UW–Madison, Auburn University and the University of Vermont.

Motivation - A better understanding of the factors contributing to rural challenges and rural success:

- Loss of critical institutions, industrial restructuring, out-migration/population loss, high mortality rates, lack of housing, declining civic engagement/social capital, etc.;

- But not everywhere! – How can we learn from places that are doing well (or were doing well and transitioned into decline)?

- How can we better understand path dependency? Regional interactions? Outliers?

- Can we create blueprints for supporting community and regional livability?

Change in Metropolitan Counties - 1950 to 2020
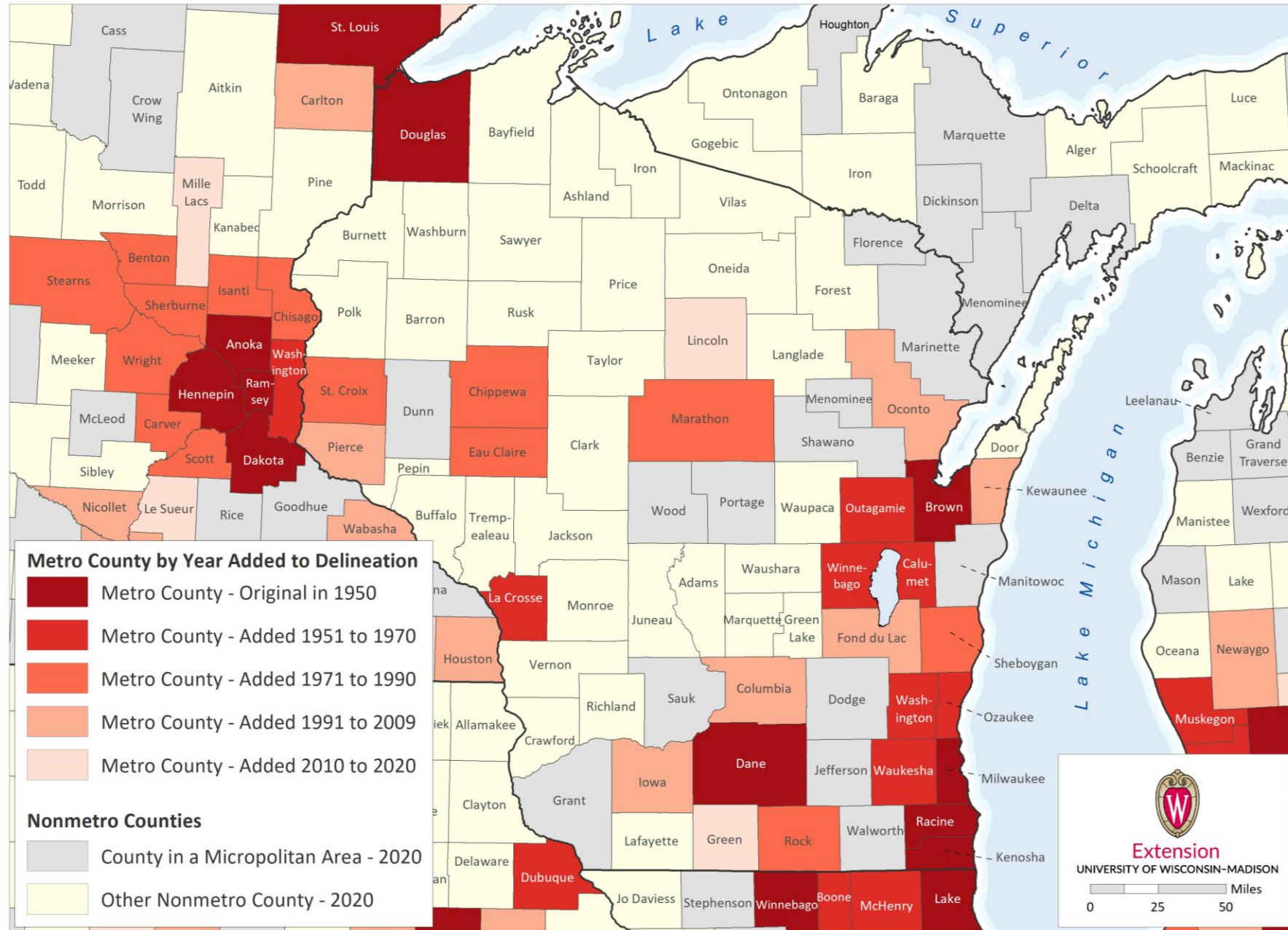
Defining and Identifying Livable Communities
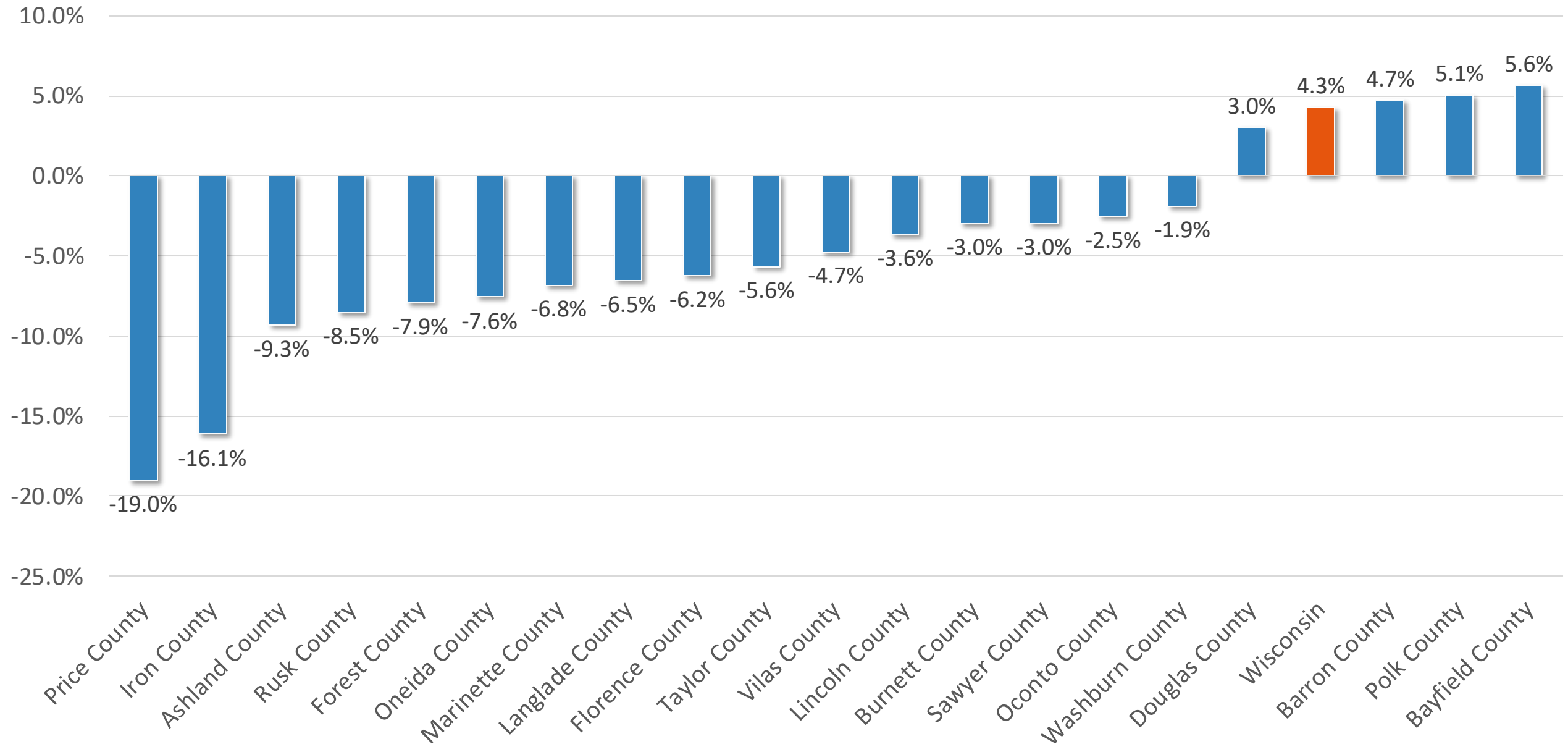## *How do you define "livable"?*

Often the emphasis is measuring the growth of economic variables:

- Population
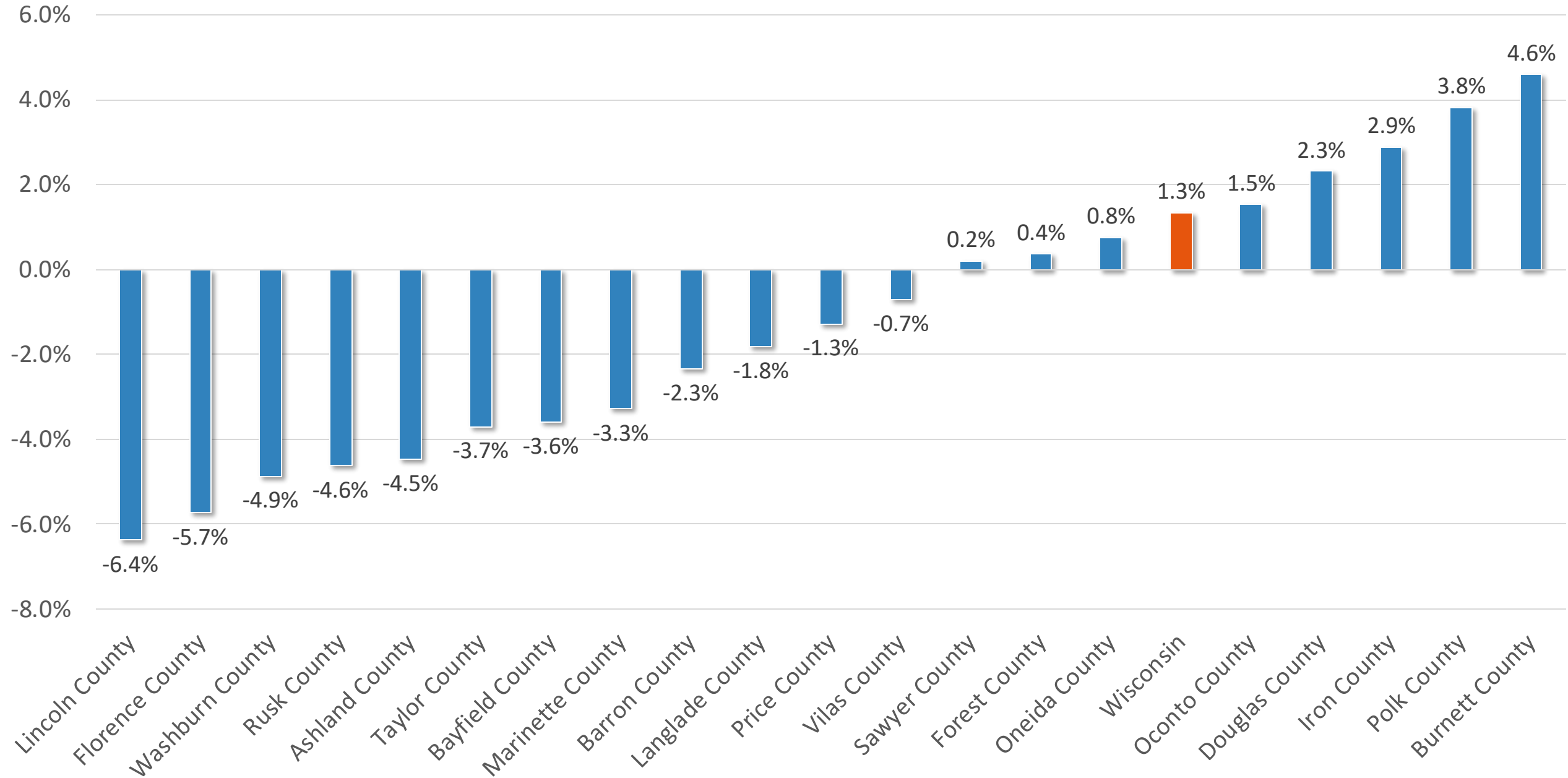- Jobs/Employment
- Income/Wages
- GDP

Many Northern Wisconsin communities are thriving and doing well...but by traditional economic growth metrics they appear to be stagnant. *Is the focus on growth of traditional metrics too narrow?*

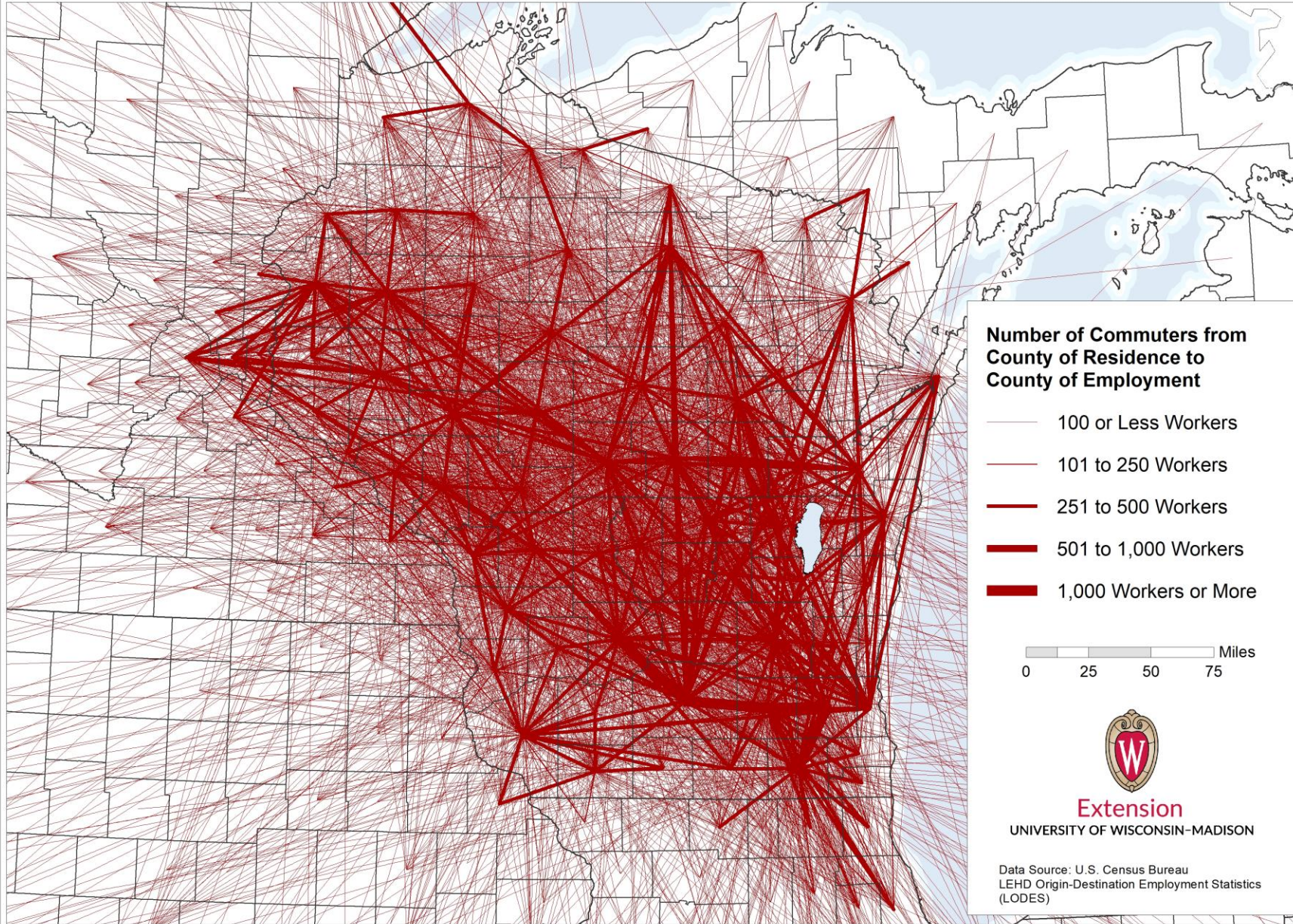# Percent Change in Total Employment - 2006 to 2019

Price County	-19.0%		
Iron County	-16.1%		
Ashland County	-9.3%		
Rusk County	-8.5%		
Forest County	-7.9%		
Oneida County	-7.6%		
Marinette County	-6.8%		
Langlade County	-6.5%		
Florence County	-6.2%		
Taylor County	-5.6%		
Vilas County	-4.7%		
Lincoln County	-3.6%		
Burnett County	-3.0%		
Sawyer County	-3.0%		
Oconto County	-2.5%		
Washburn County	-1.9%		
Douglas County	3.0%		
Wisconsin	4.3%		
Barron County	4.7%		
Polk County	5.1%		
Bayfield County	5.6%		

Data Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Percent Change in Total Employment - Q3 2019 to Q3 2023

County	Value
Lincoln County	-6.4%
Florence County	-5.7%
Washburn County	-4.9%
Rusk County	-4.6%
Ashland County	-4.5%
Taylor County	-3.7%
Bayfield County	-3.6%
Marinette County	-3.3%
Barron County	-2.3%
Langlade County	-1.8%
Price County	-1.3%
Vilas County	-0.7%
Sawyer County	0.2%
Forest County	0.4%
Oneida County	0.8%
Wisconsin	1.3%
Oconto County	1.5%
Douglas County	2.3%
Iron County	2.9%
Polk County	3.8%
Burnett County	4.6%

Data Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Commuting Networks for Wisconsin Non-Metro Counties - Outflow from County of Residence

Number of Commuters from County of Residence to County of Employment

- 100 or Less Workers
- 101 to 250 Workers
- 251 to 500 Workers
- 501 to 1,000 Workers
- 1,000 Workers or More

Miles
0 25 50 75

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Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau
LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics
(LODES)

Northern Wisconsin Business Annual Business Applications – 2005 to 2022
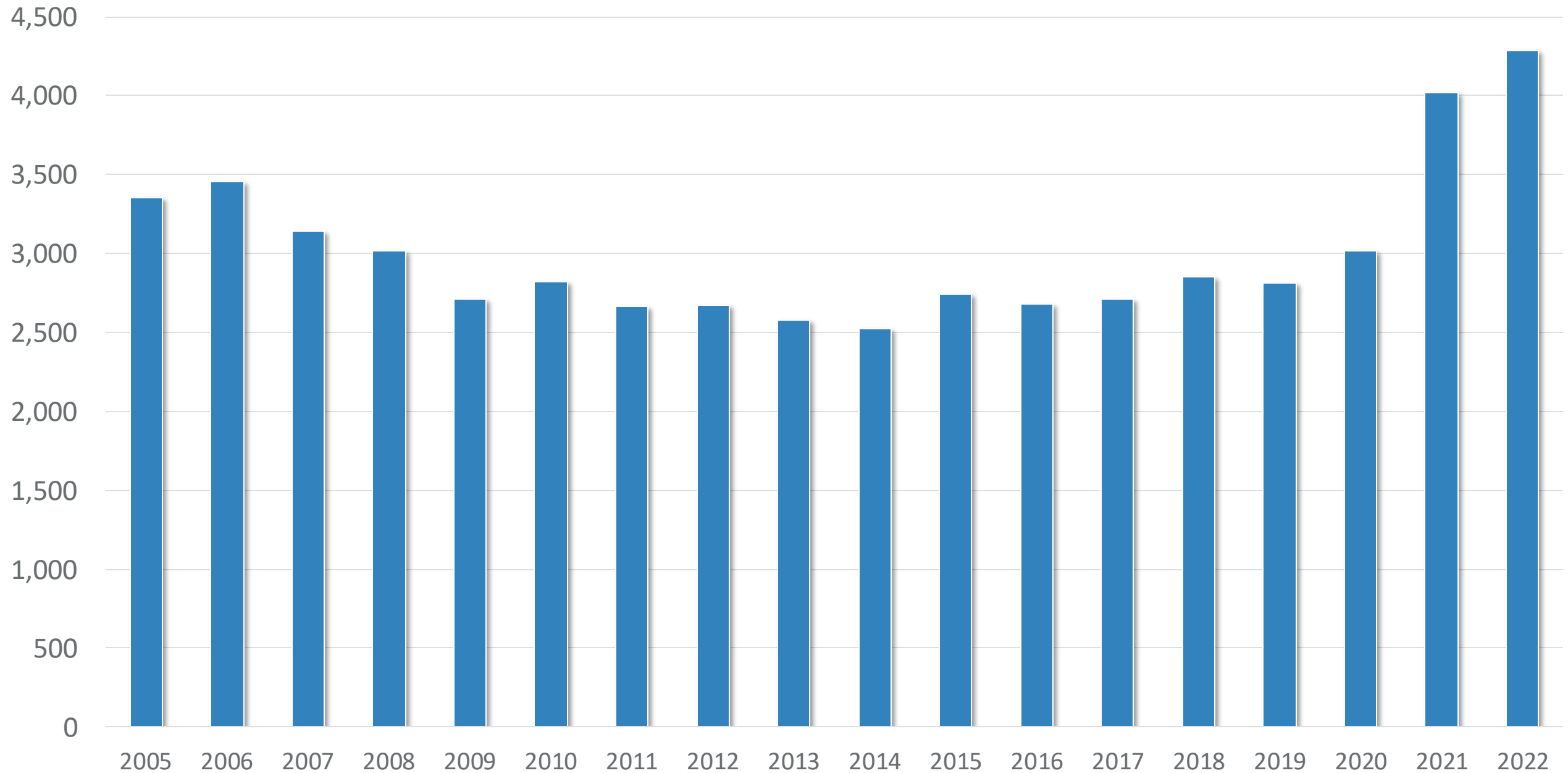
Percent Change in Business Applications - 2020 to 2022

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau Business Formation Statistics
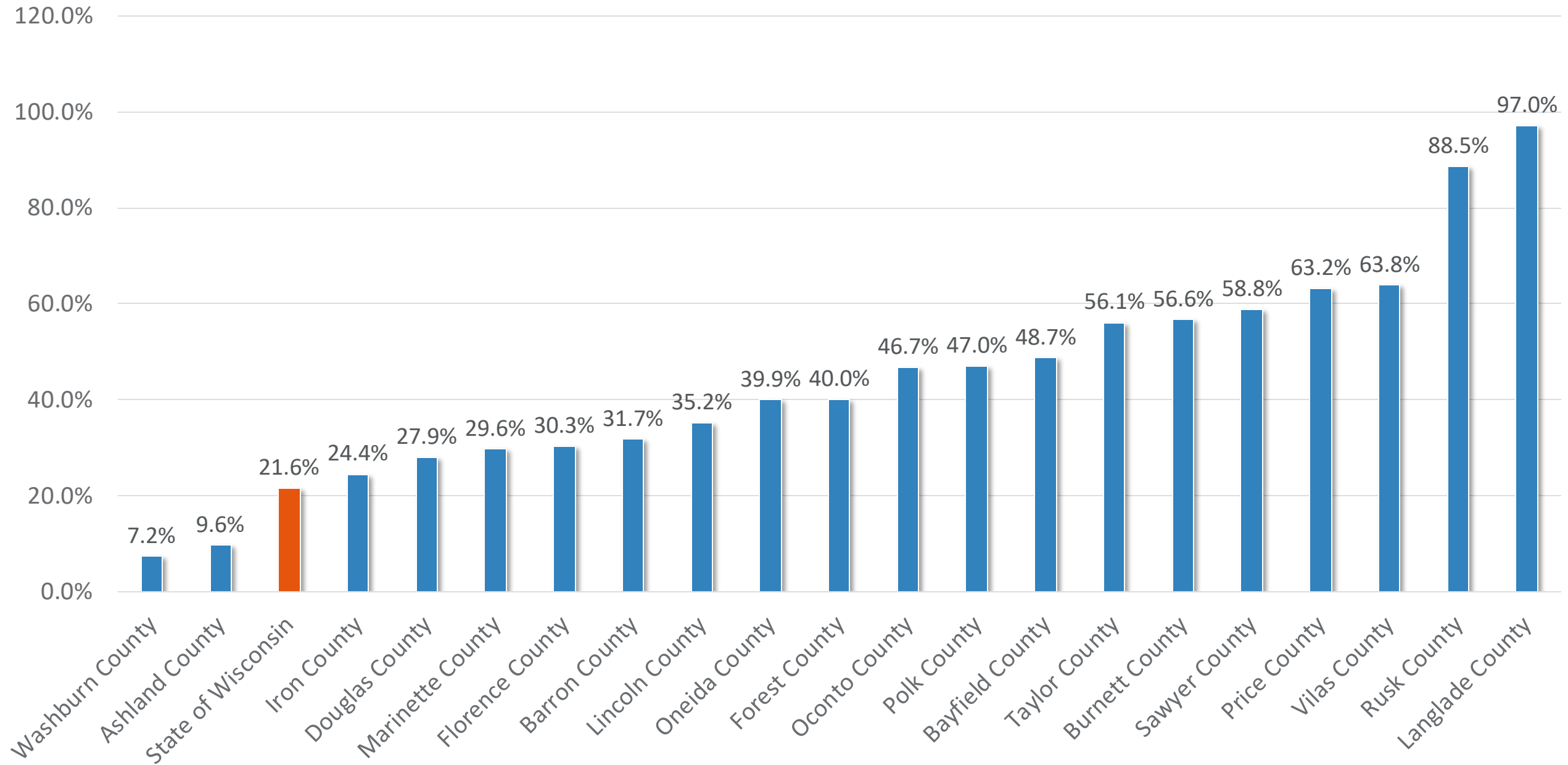
Annual Average Unemployment Rate (2023)

Location	Rate
Wisconsin	3.0%
Lincoln County	3.2%
Oconto County	3.3%
Florence County	3.4%
Oneida County	3.4%
Price County	3.4%
Barron County	3.6%
Langlade County	3.6%
United States	3.6%
Ashland County	3.7%
Rusk County	3.7%
Taylor County	3.7%
Washburn County	3.7%
Vilas County	3.9%
Marinette County	4.0%
Polk County	4.1%
Sawyer County	4.2%
Douglas County	4.3%
Bayfield County	4.5%
Burnett County	4.6%
Forest County	4.8%
Iron County	5.5%

Data Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics LAUS

State of Wisconsin Unemployed Individuals per Job Opening
January 2001 to February 2024* (Seasonally Adjusted)

0.56

Labor Force Participation Rate for Men Ages 25 to 54
2018-2022 Five-Year Estimates
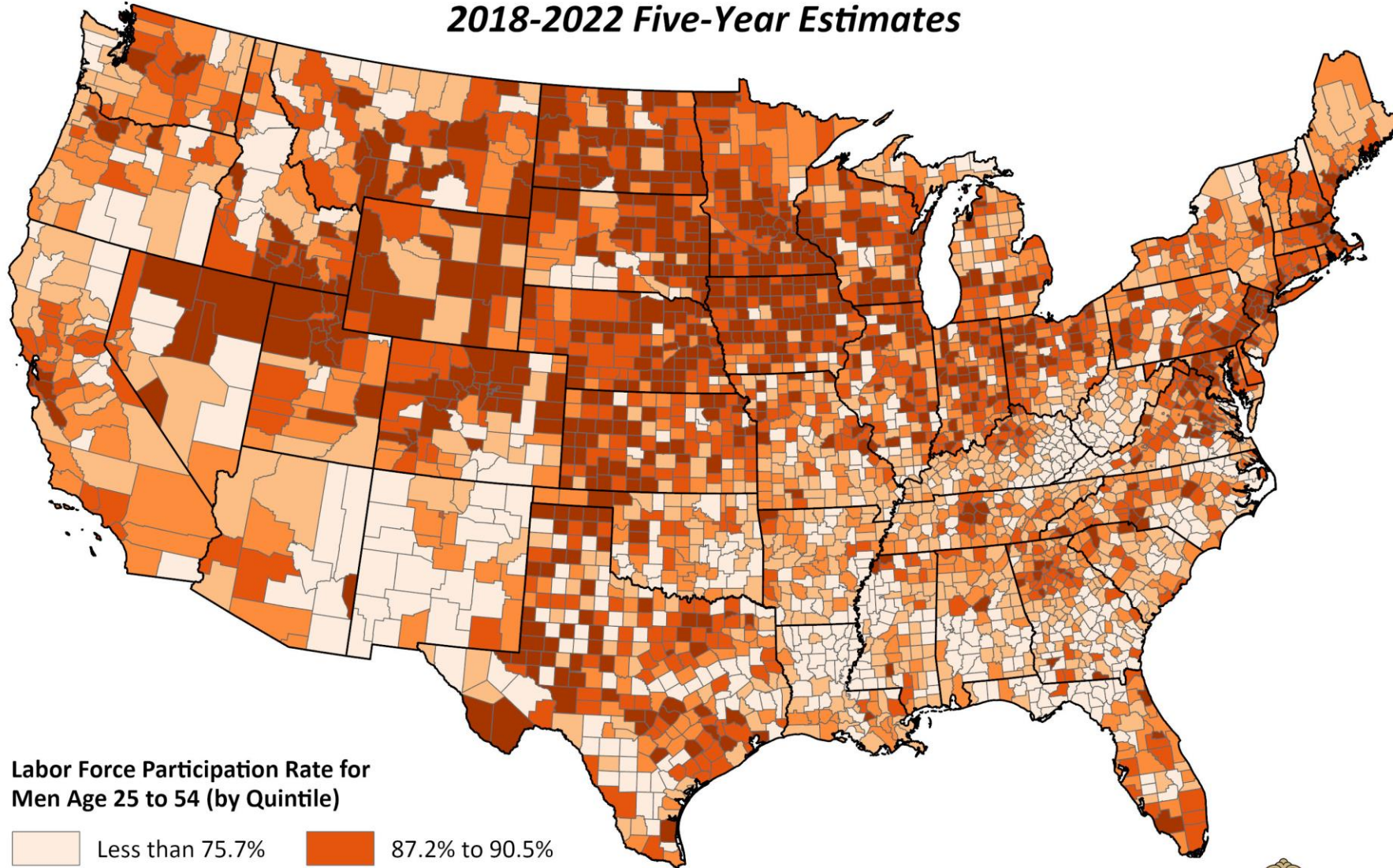
Labor Force Participation Rate for Men Age 25 to 54 (by Quintile)
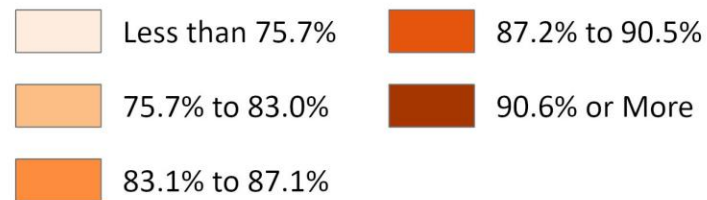
- Less than 75.7%
- 75.7% to 83.0%
- 83.1% to 87.1%
- 87.2% to 90.5%
- 90.6% or More

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022 American Community Survey.
Numbers are subject to a margin of error.

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Labor Force Participation Rate for Men Ages 25 to 54
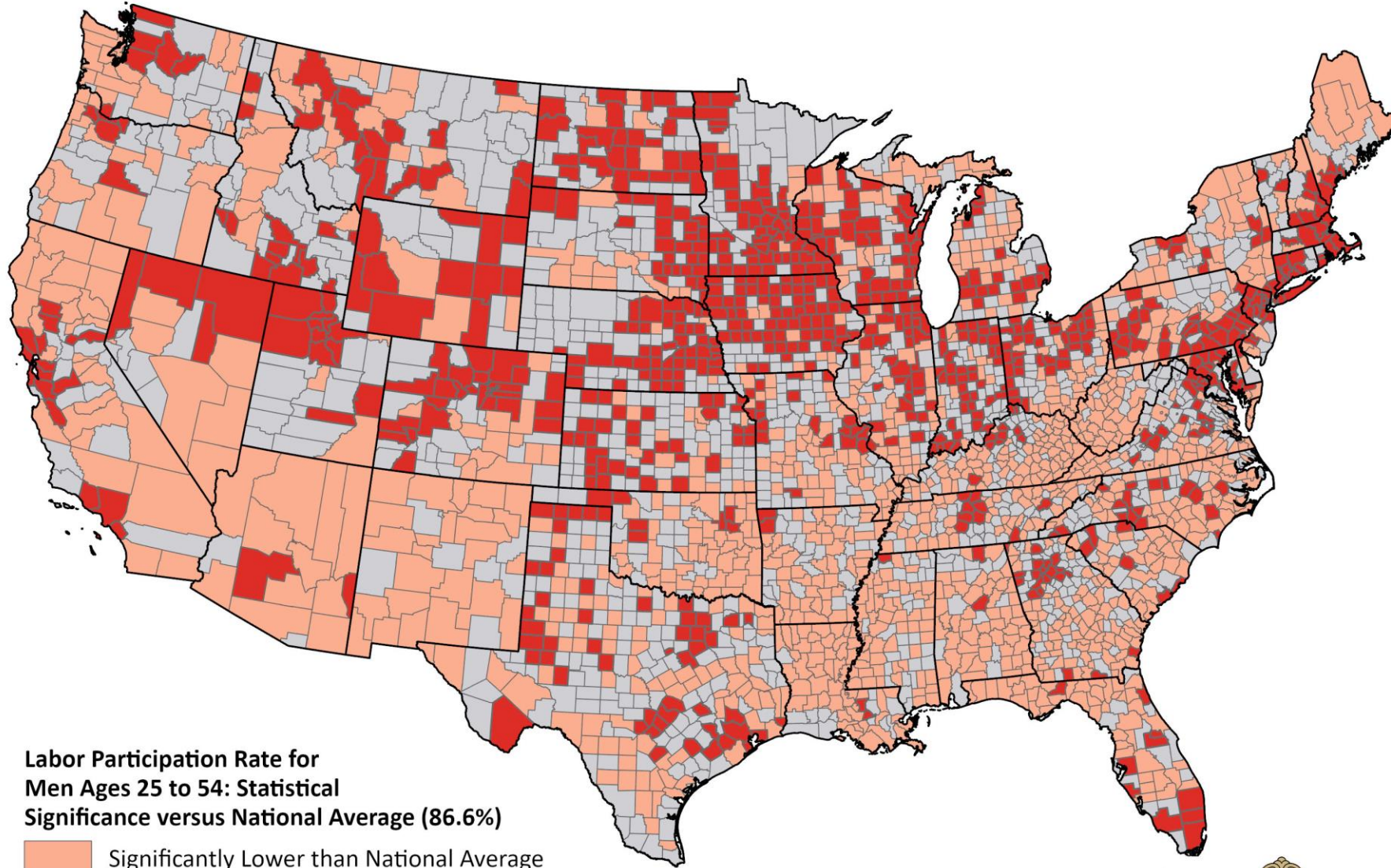
Labor Participation Rate for
Men Ages 25 to 54: Statistical
Significance versus National Average (86.6%)

Significantly Lower than National Average

Significantly Higher than National Average

Not Significantly Different from National Average

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022
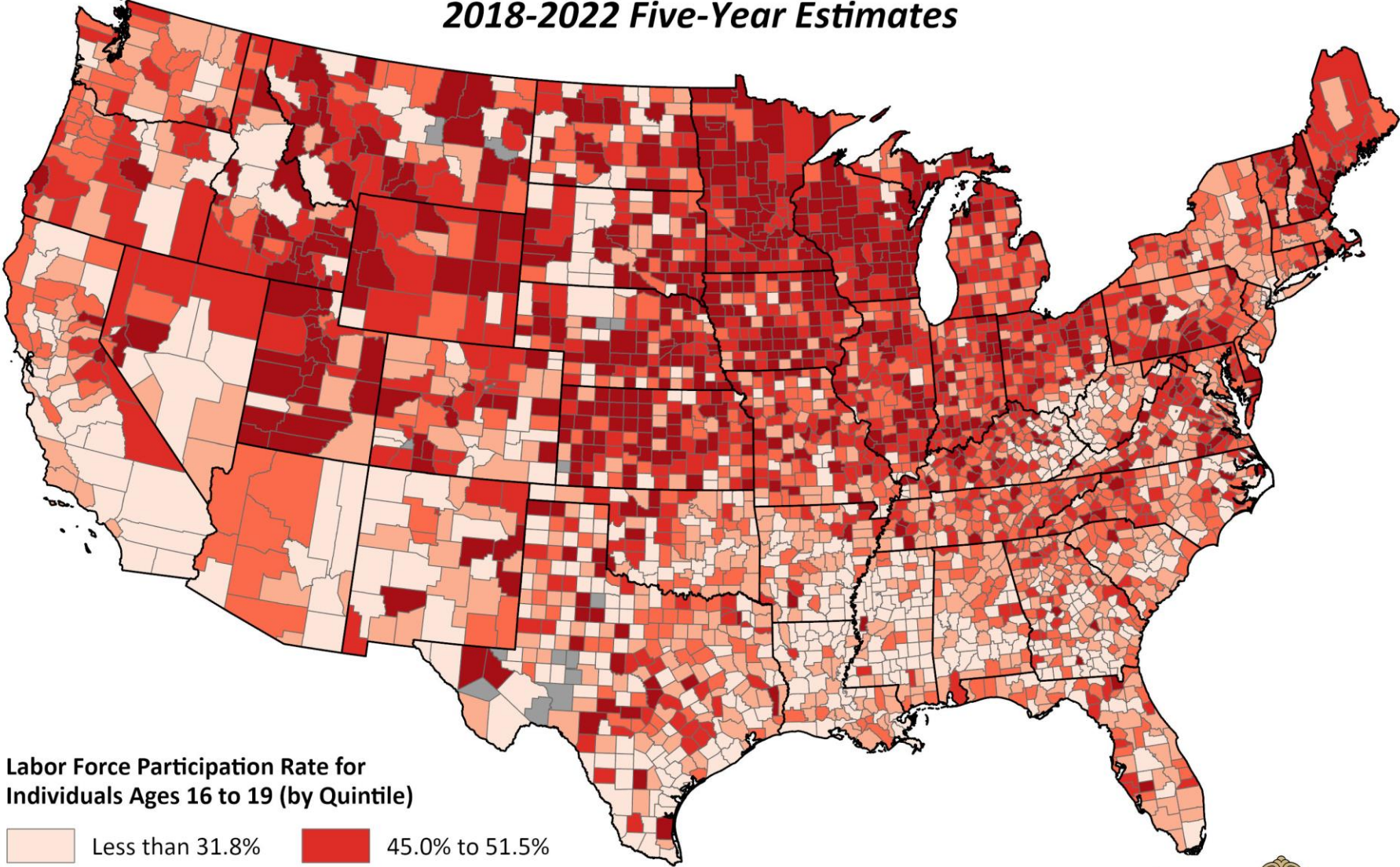American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.

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Labor Force Participation Rate for Women Ages 25 to 54
2018-2022 Five-Year Estimates
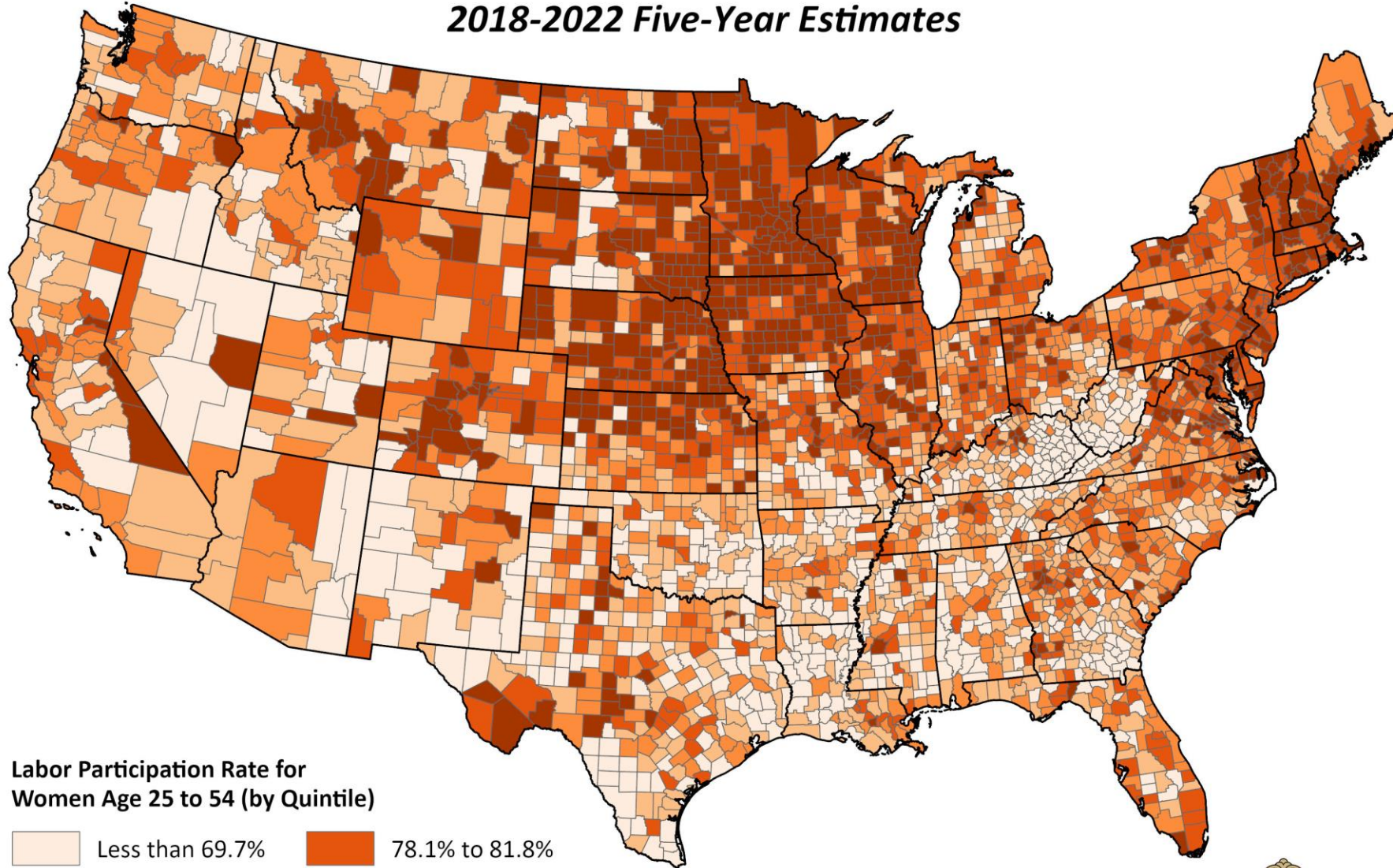
Labor Participation Rate for Women Age 25 to 54 (by Quintile)
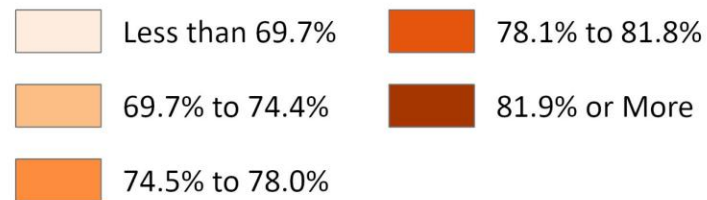
- Less than 69.7%
- 69.7% to 74.4%
- 74.5% to 78.0%
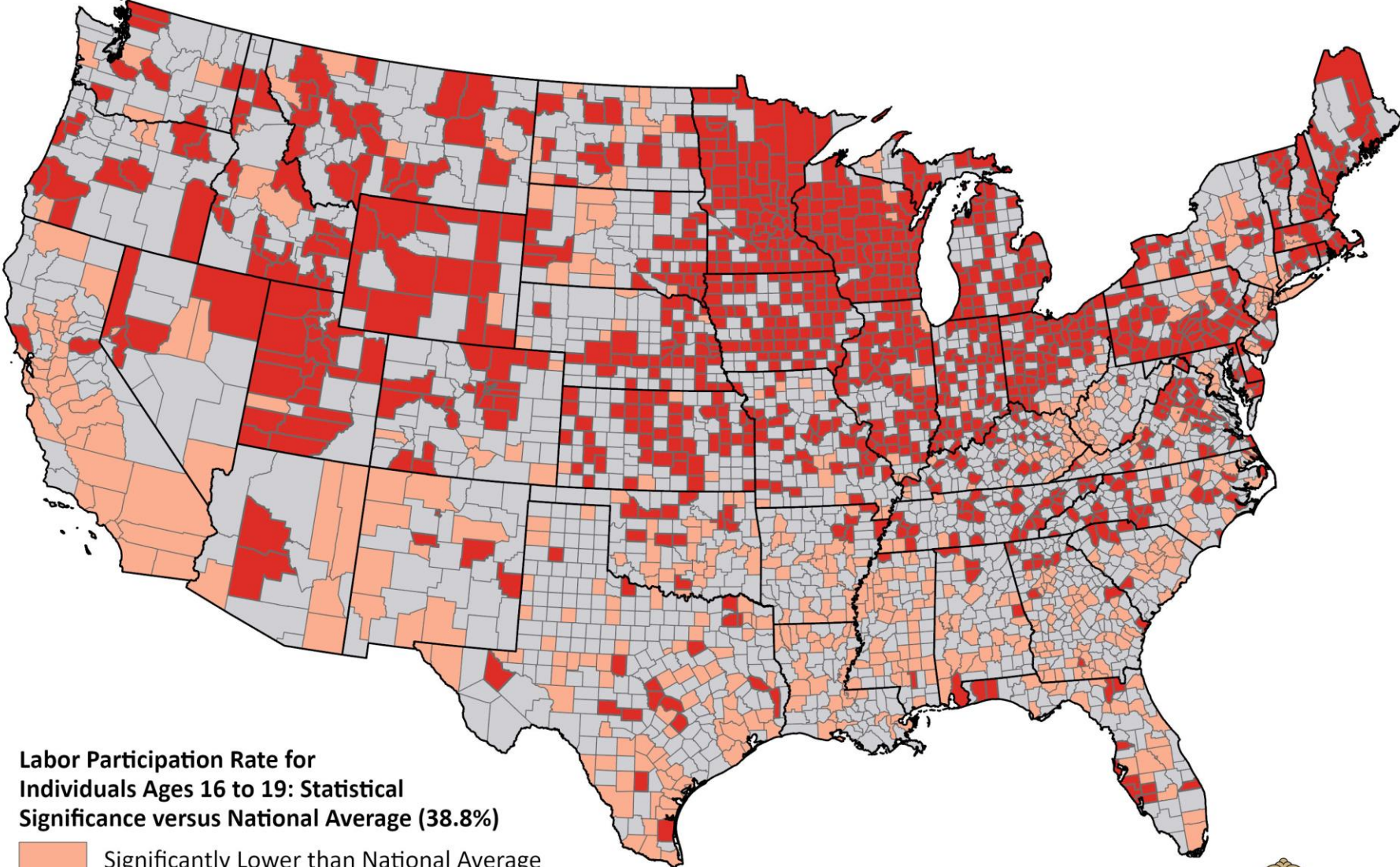- 78.1% to 81.8%
- 81.9% or More

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022 American Community Survey.
Numbers are subject to a margin of error.

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Labor Force Participation Rate for Women Ages 25 to 54
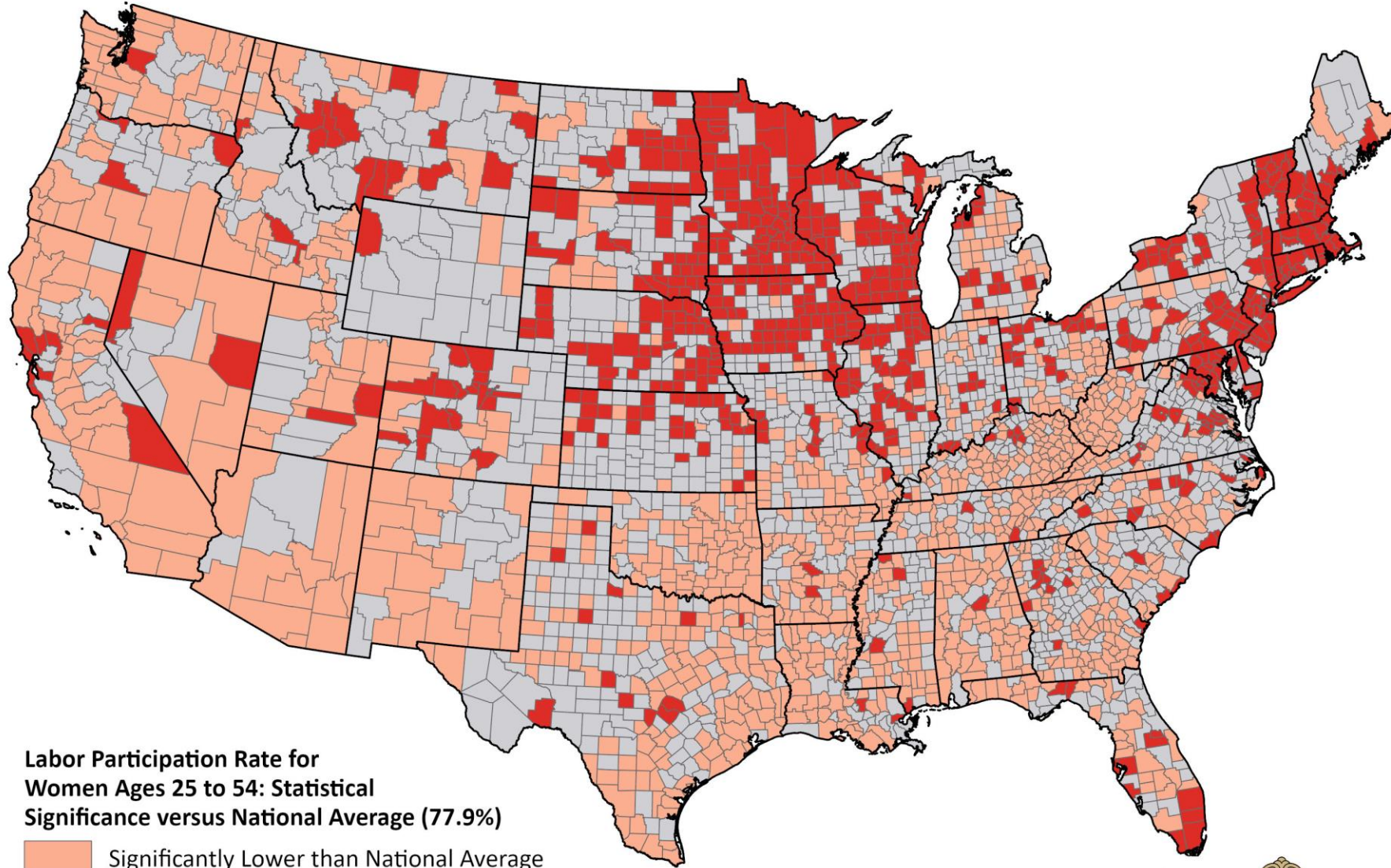
Labor Participation Rate for Women Ages 25 to 54: Statistical Significance versus National Average (77.9%)

- Significantly Lower than National Average
- Significantly Higher than National Average
- Not Significantly Different from National Average

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.
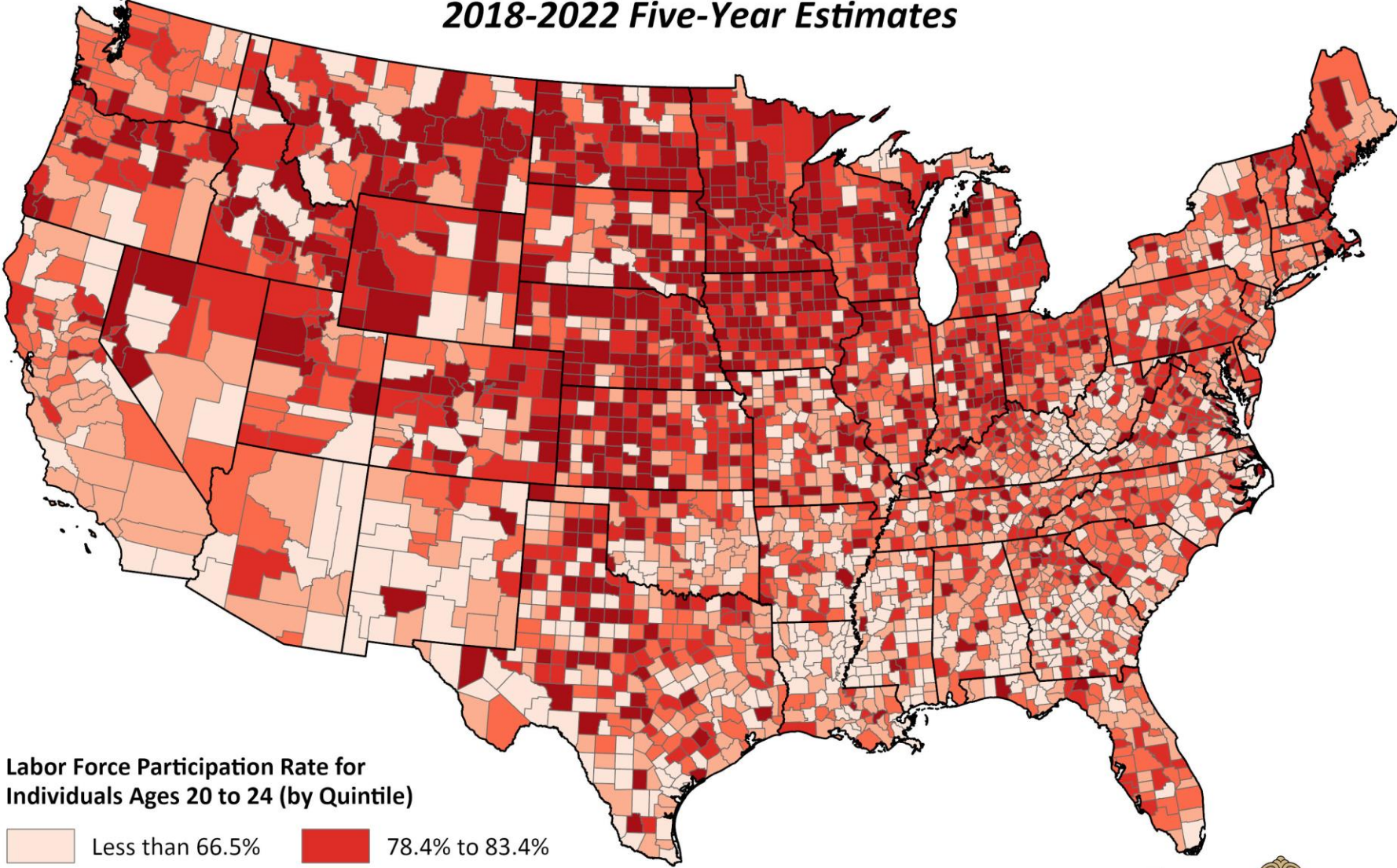
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Labor Force Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 16 to 19
2018-2022 Five-Year Estimates

Labor Force Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 16 to 19 (by Quintile)

- Less than 31.8%
- 31.8% to 39.2%
- 39.3% to 44.9%
- 45.0% to 51.5%
- 51.6% or More
- Not Available

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022 American Community Survey.
Numbers are subject to a margin of error.

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Labor Force Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 16 to 19

Labor Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 16 to 19: Statistical Significance versus National Average (38.8%)

Significantly Lower than National Average

Significantly Higher than National Average

Not Significantly Different from National Average

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022
American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.
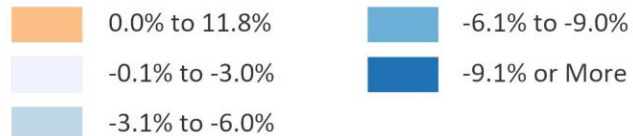
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Labor Force Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 20 to 24
2018-2022 Five-Year Estimates

Labor Force Participation Rate for
Individuals Ages 20 to 24 (by Quintile)

Less than 66.5%	78.4% to 83.4%
66.5% to 73.8%	83.5% or More
73.9% to 78.3%	Not Available

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2018-2022
American Community Survey.
Numbers are subject to a margin of error.

Labor Force Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 20 to 24
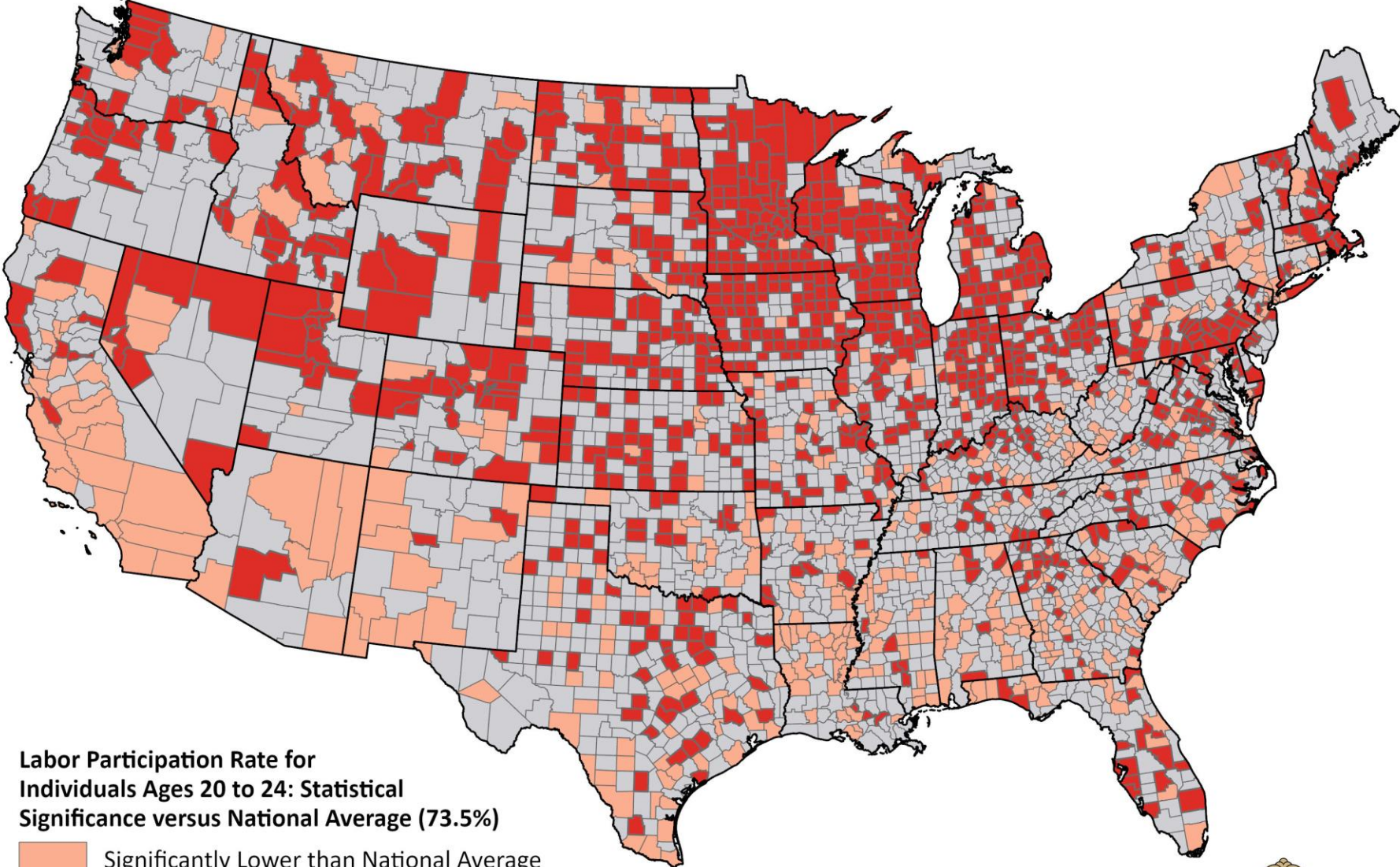
Labor Participation Rate for Individuals Ages 20 to 24: Statistical Significance versus National Average (73.5%)

Significantly Lower than National Average

Significantly Higher than National Average

Not Significantly Different from National Average

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022
American Community Survey 5-Year estimates.

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Changes in Total Working Age and Prime Working Age Population - 2010 to 2022

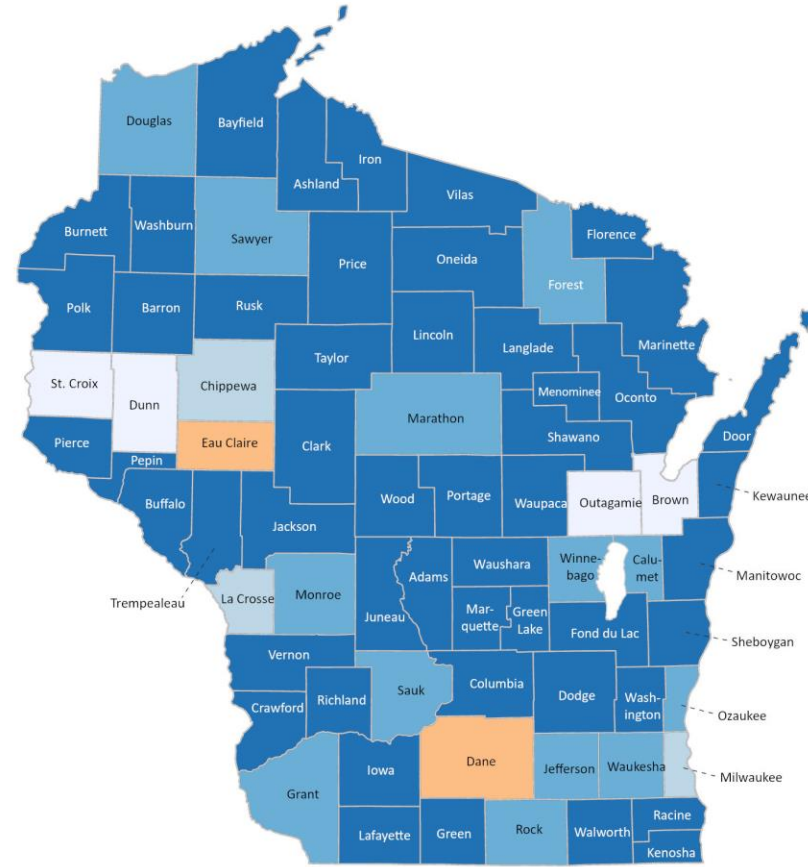### Percent Change in Total Working Age Population (Age 15 to 64) - 2010 Census to 2022 Estimates
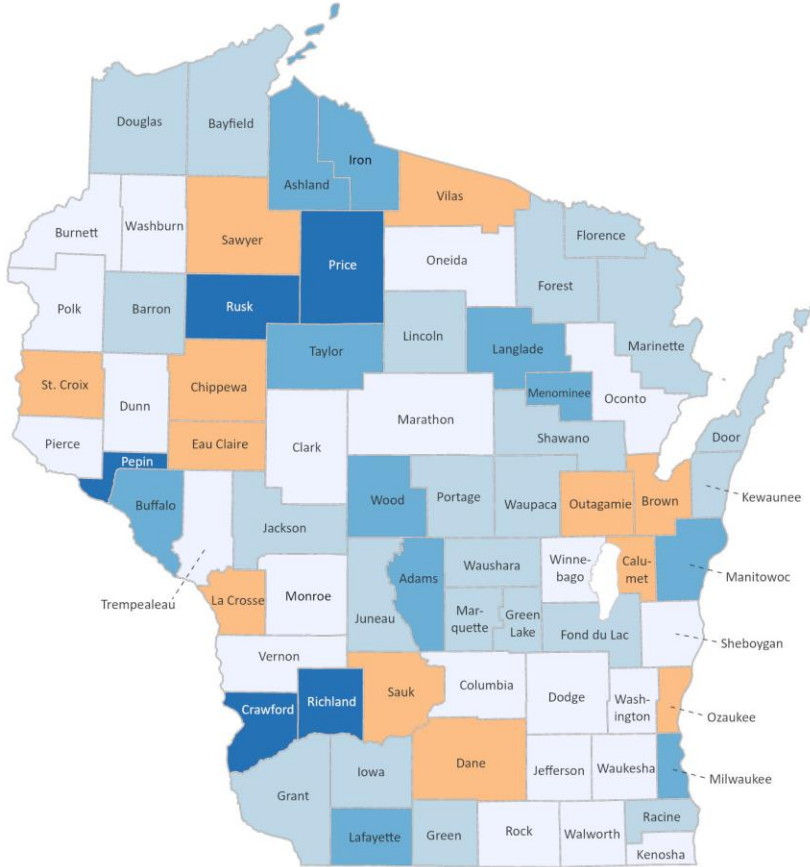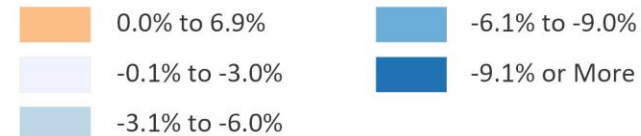
Percent Change in Prime Working Age Population (Age 25 to 54) - 2010 Census to 2022 Estimates

Percent Change in Total Working Age Population
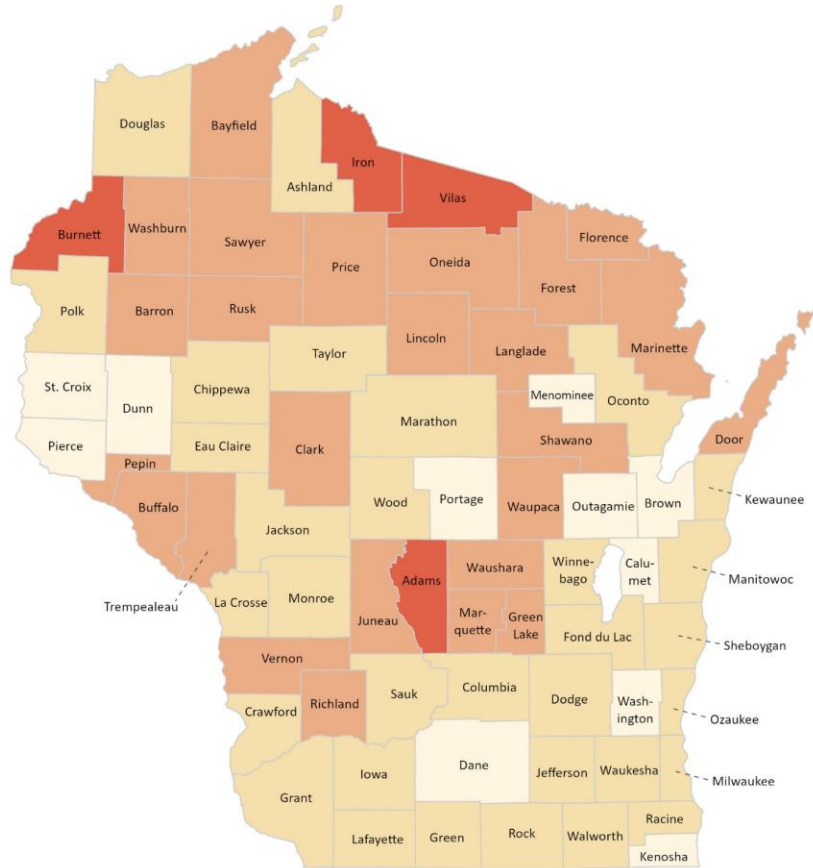
- 0.0% to 11.8%
- -0.1% to -3.0%
- -3.1% to -6.0%
- -6.1% to -9.0%
- -9.1% or More

Percent Change in Prime Working Age Population

- 0.0% to 6.9%
- -0.1% to -3.0%
- -3.1% to -6.0%
- -6.1% to -9.0%
- -9.1% or More

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Population Age 65 and Over by County - 2000 Census and 2022 Estimates
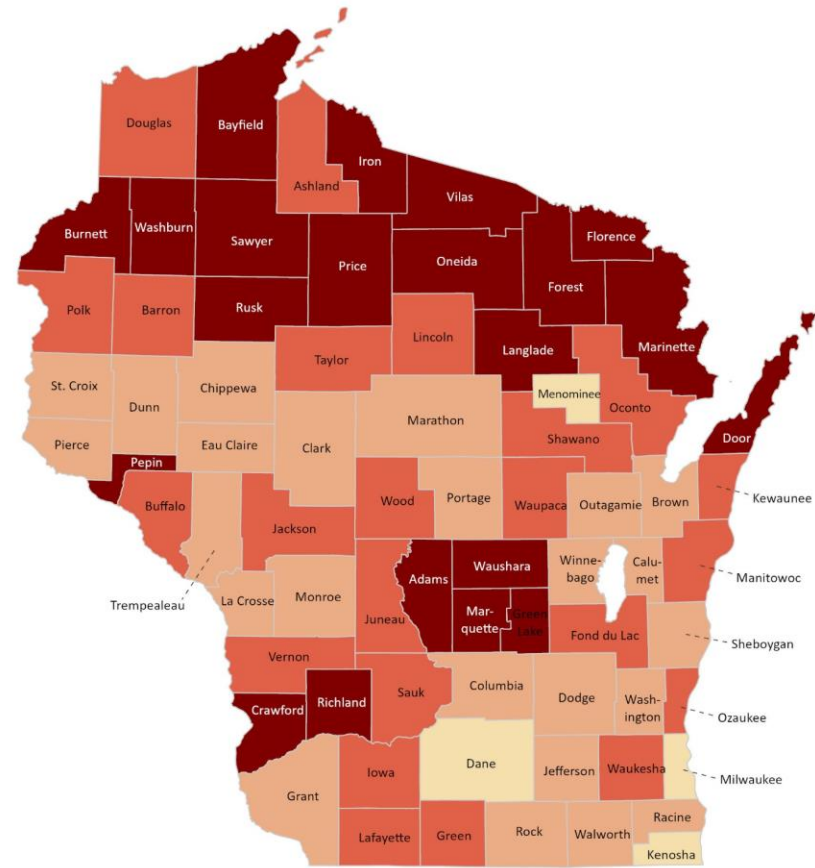
Do Jobs Follow People or do People Follow Jobs?

Businesses Need Talent

Talent Wants Quality Places

Places Need Businesses

Source: Wyckoff, 2014
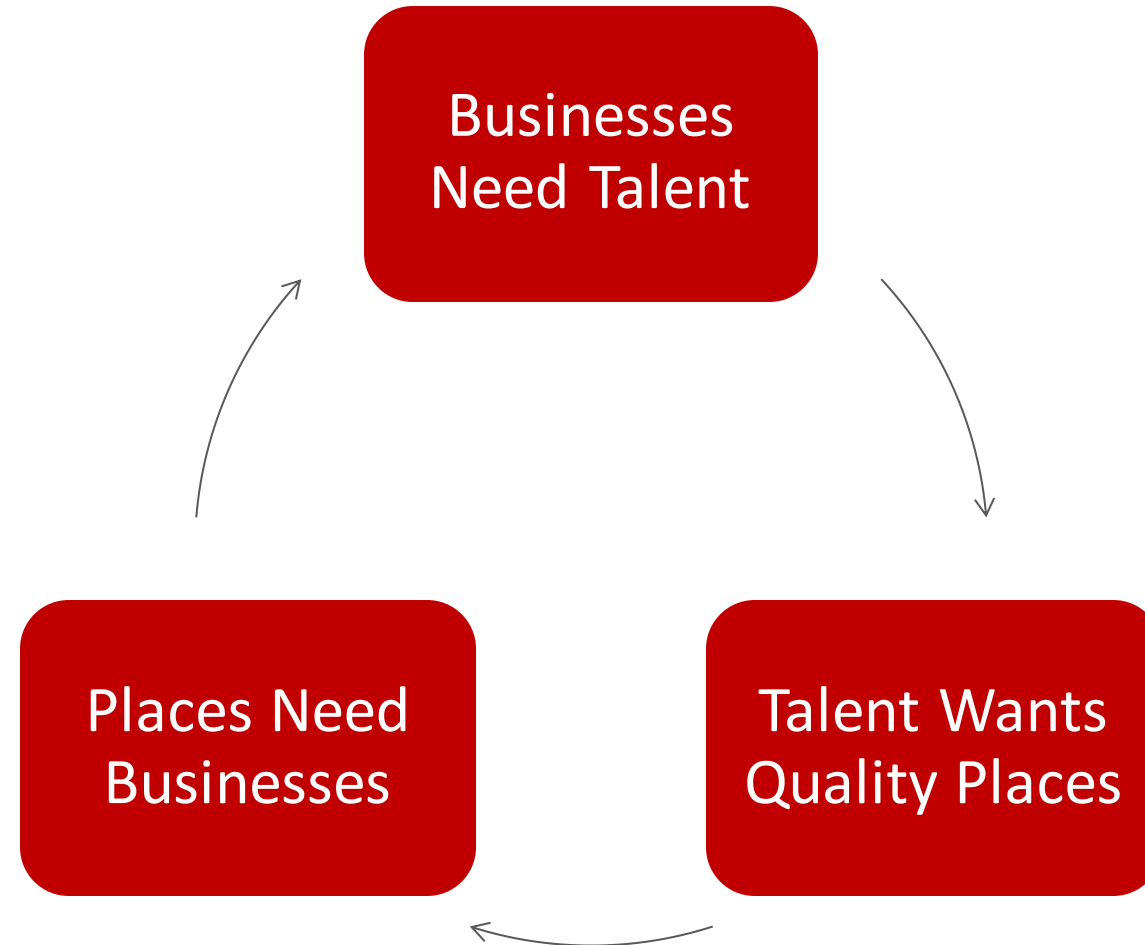
What if we Shift the Focus to Quality of Life?

- What defines quality of life?

- Different people value different community attributes;

- **Community Capitals Framework** provides one model.
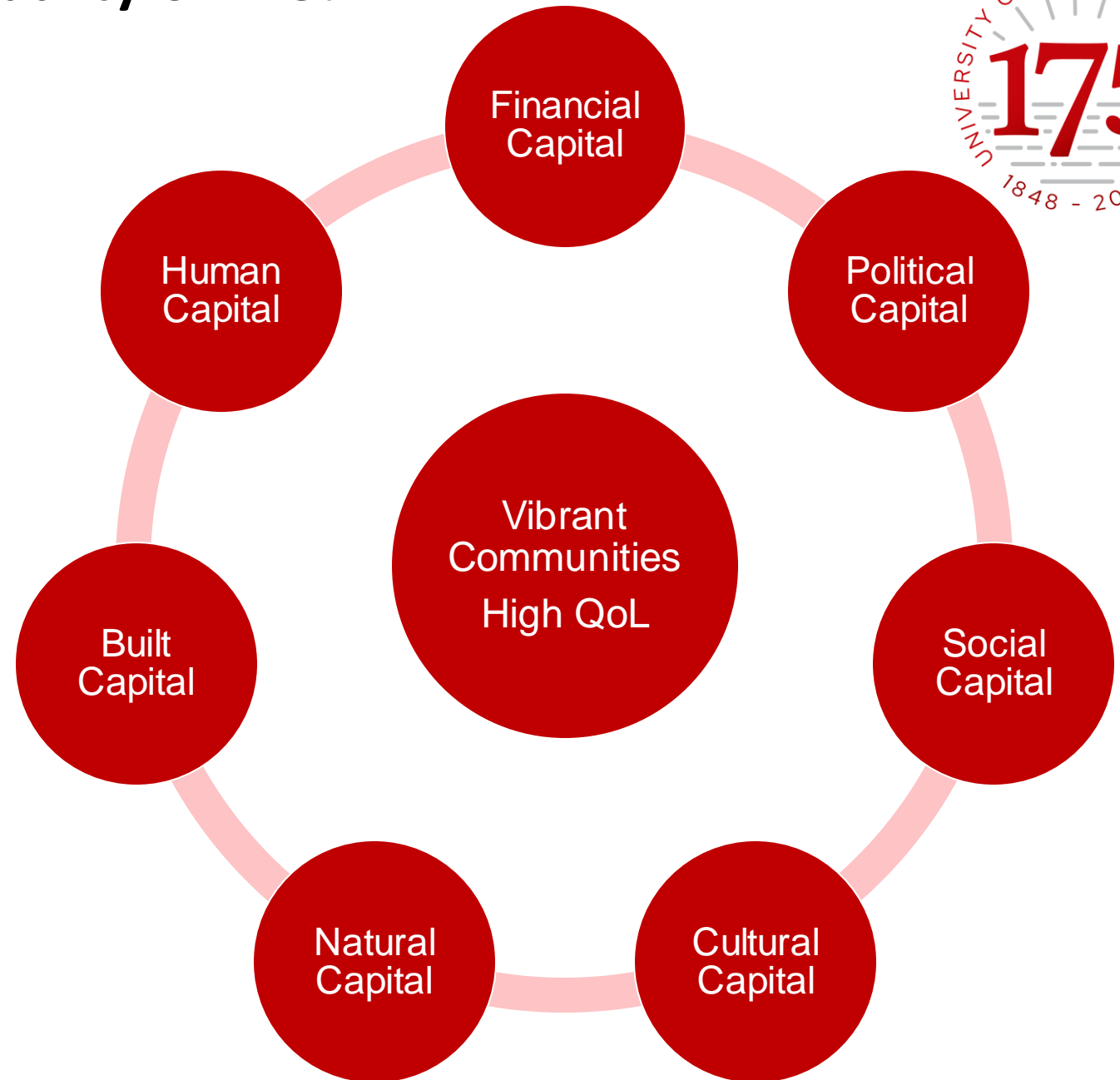
What can People's Behavior tell us about Community Livability?

- **High in-migration**: A signal that people want to live there?

- **Low out-migration:** An indicator that people who live there want to stay?

- **A stable or high birth rate**: An indicator that people want to have families in a community or demographics are favorable to a high birth rate?

- **Home value appreciation:** An indicator of the value of living in a place or a barrier to people who want to live there?

- **New business start-ups**: An indicator that people view a community as a good place to own a business?

Percent Change in Population by County - 2000 to 2010
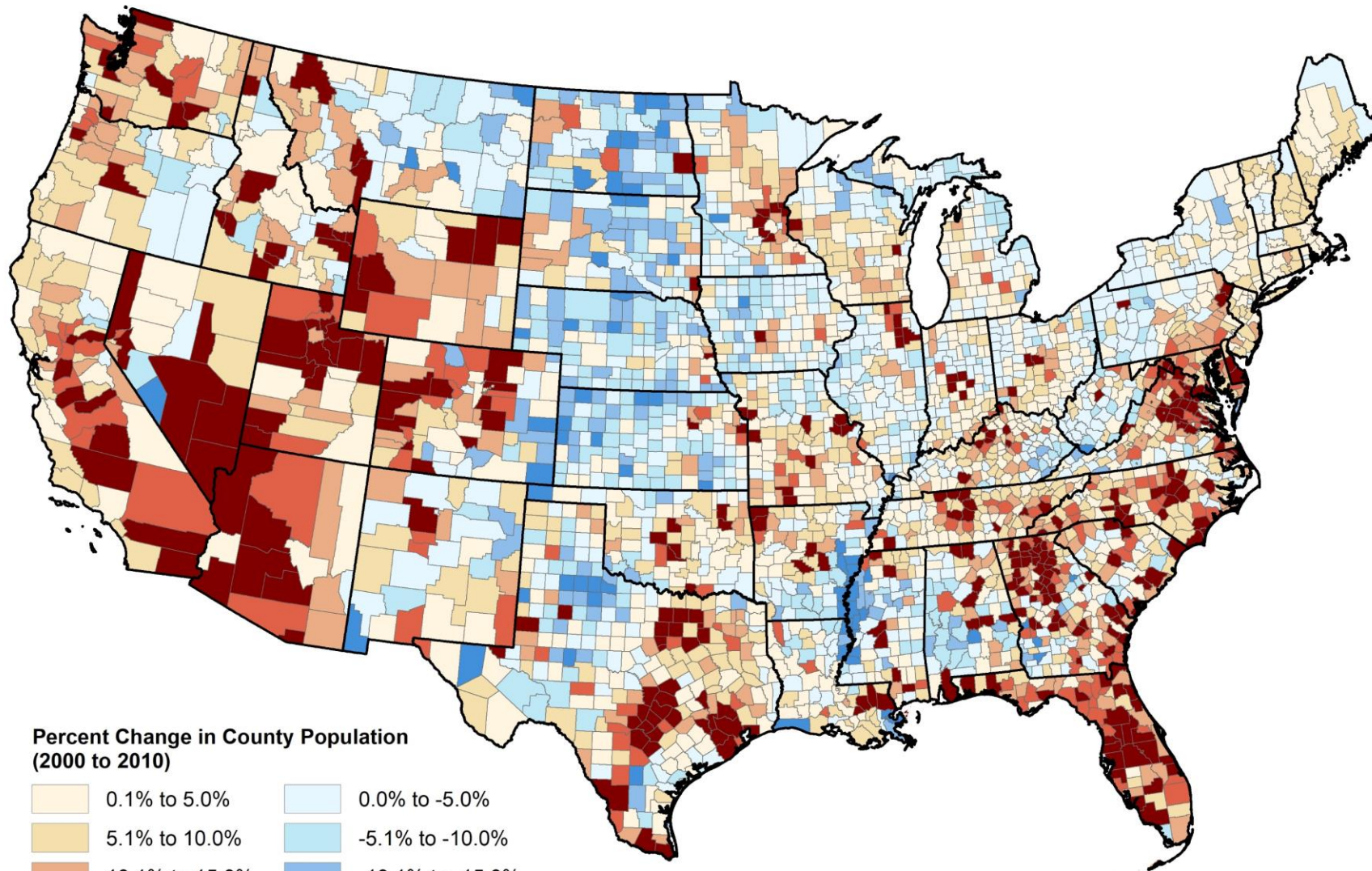
Percent Change in County Population (2000 to 2010)

- 0.1% to 5.0%
- 5.1% to 10.0%
- 10.1% to 15.0%
- 15.1% to 20.0%
- 20.1% to 110.4%
- 0.0% to -5.0%
- -5.1% to -10.0%
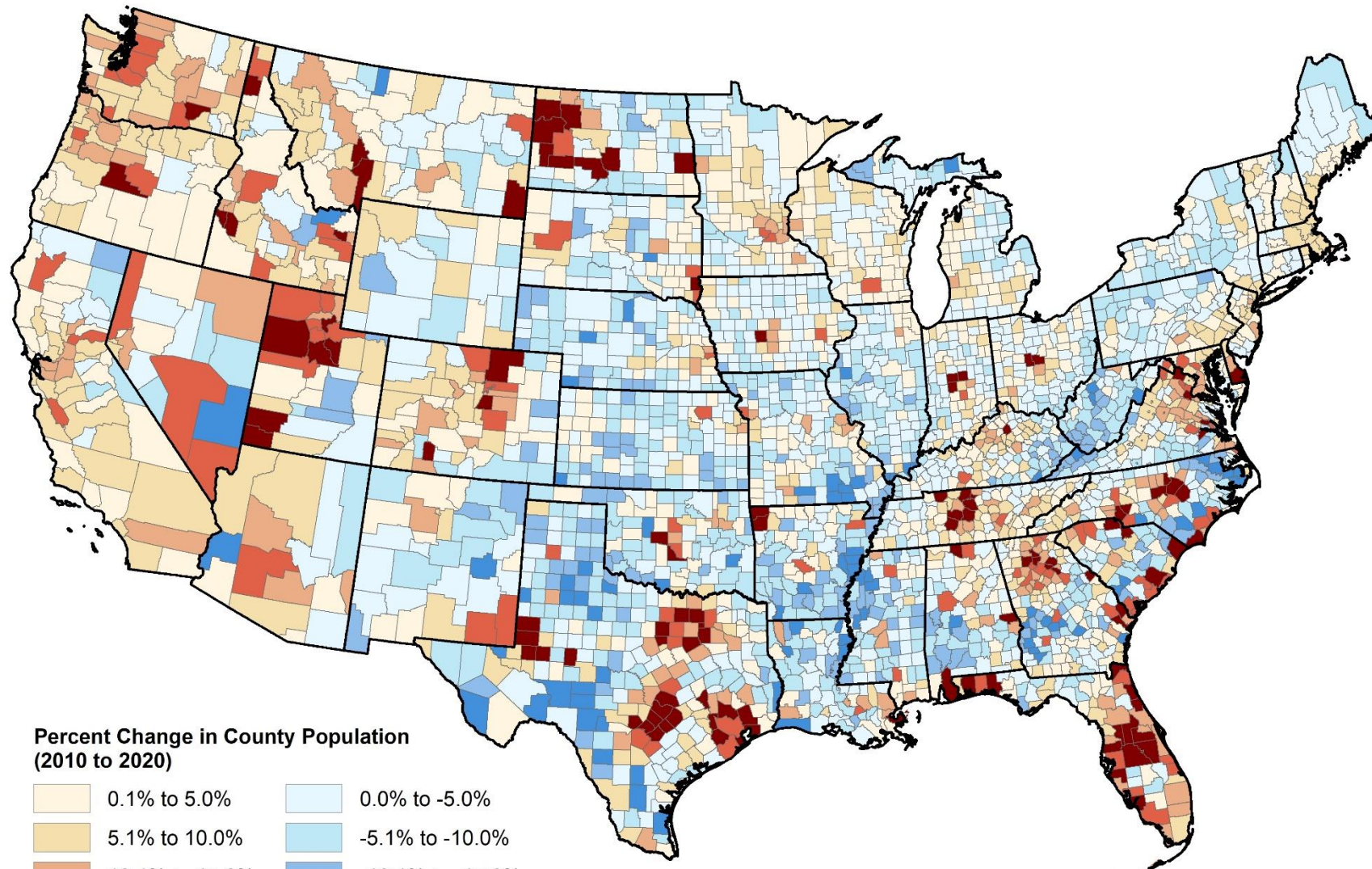- -10.1% to -15.0%
- -15.1% to -46.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis and UW-Extension
© 2017 University of Wisconsin-Extension Center for Community & Economic Development
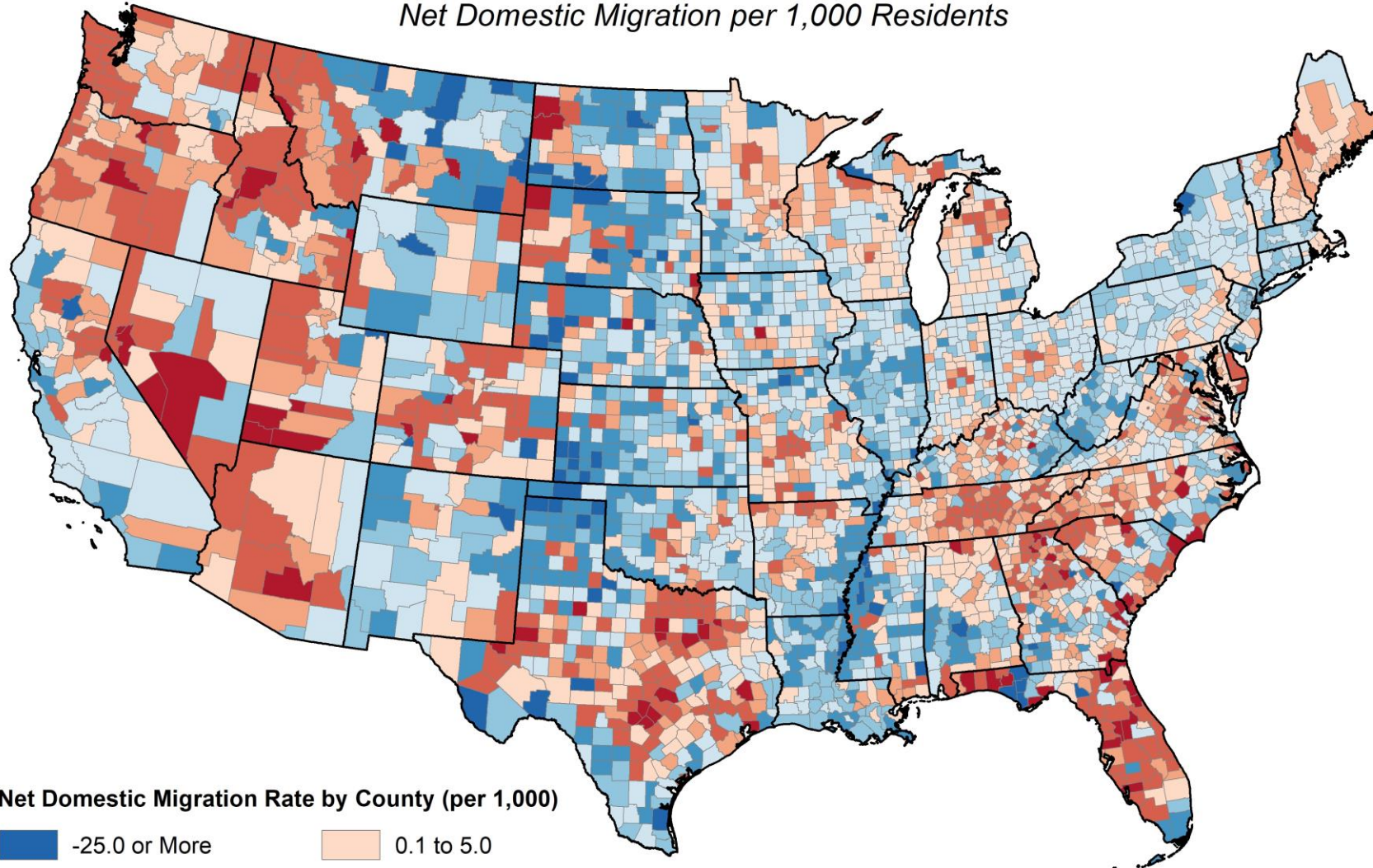
Percent Change in Population by County - 2010 to 2020

Percent Change in County Population (2010 to 2020)

0.1% to 5.0%	0.0% to -5.0%
5.1% to 10.0%	-5.1% to -10.0%
10.1% to 15.0%	-10.1% to -15.0%
15.1% to 20.0%	-15.1% to -42.1%
20.1% to 146.7%	

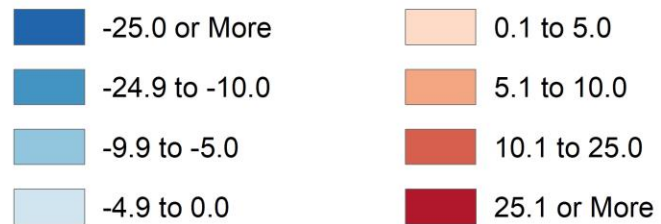Extension
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Net Domestic Migration Rate by County - 2018 to 2019
Net Domestic Migration per 1,000 Residents

Net Domestic Migration Rate by County (per 1,000)

- -25.0 or More
- -24.9 to -10.0
- -9.9 to -5.0
- -4.9 to 0.0
- 0.1 to 5.0
- 5.1 to 10.0
- 10.1 to 25.0
- 25.1 or More

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau
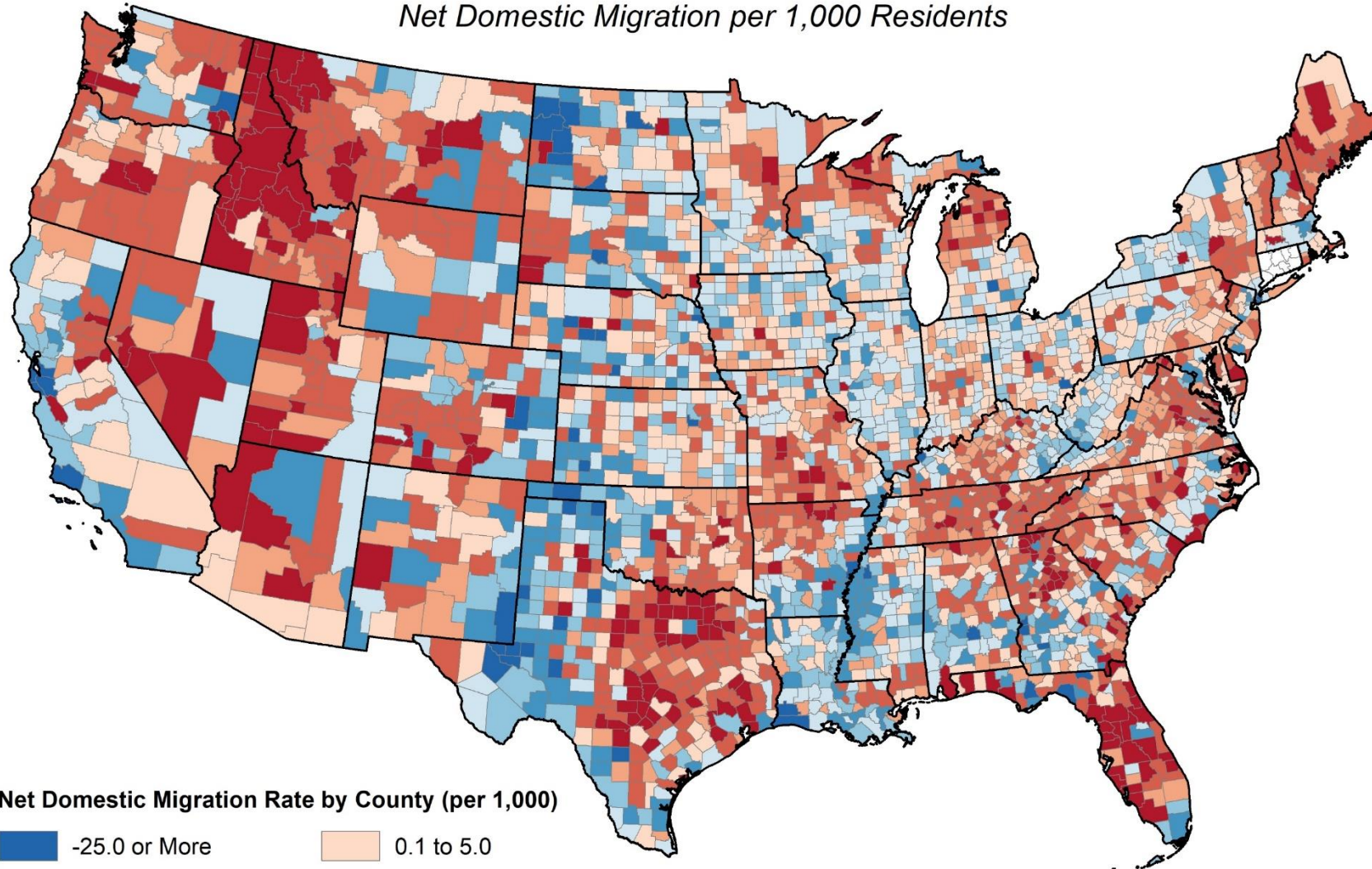
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Net Domestic Migration Rate by County - 2020 to 2021
Net Domestic Migration per 1,000 Residents

Net Domestic Migration Rate by County (per 1,000)

- -25.0 or More
- -24.9 to -10.0
- -9.9 to -5.0
- -4.9 to 0.0
- 0.1 to 5.0
- 5.1 to 10.0
- 10.1 to 25.0
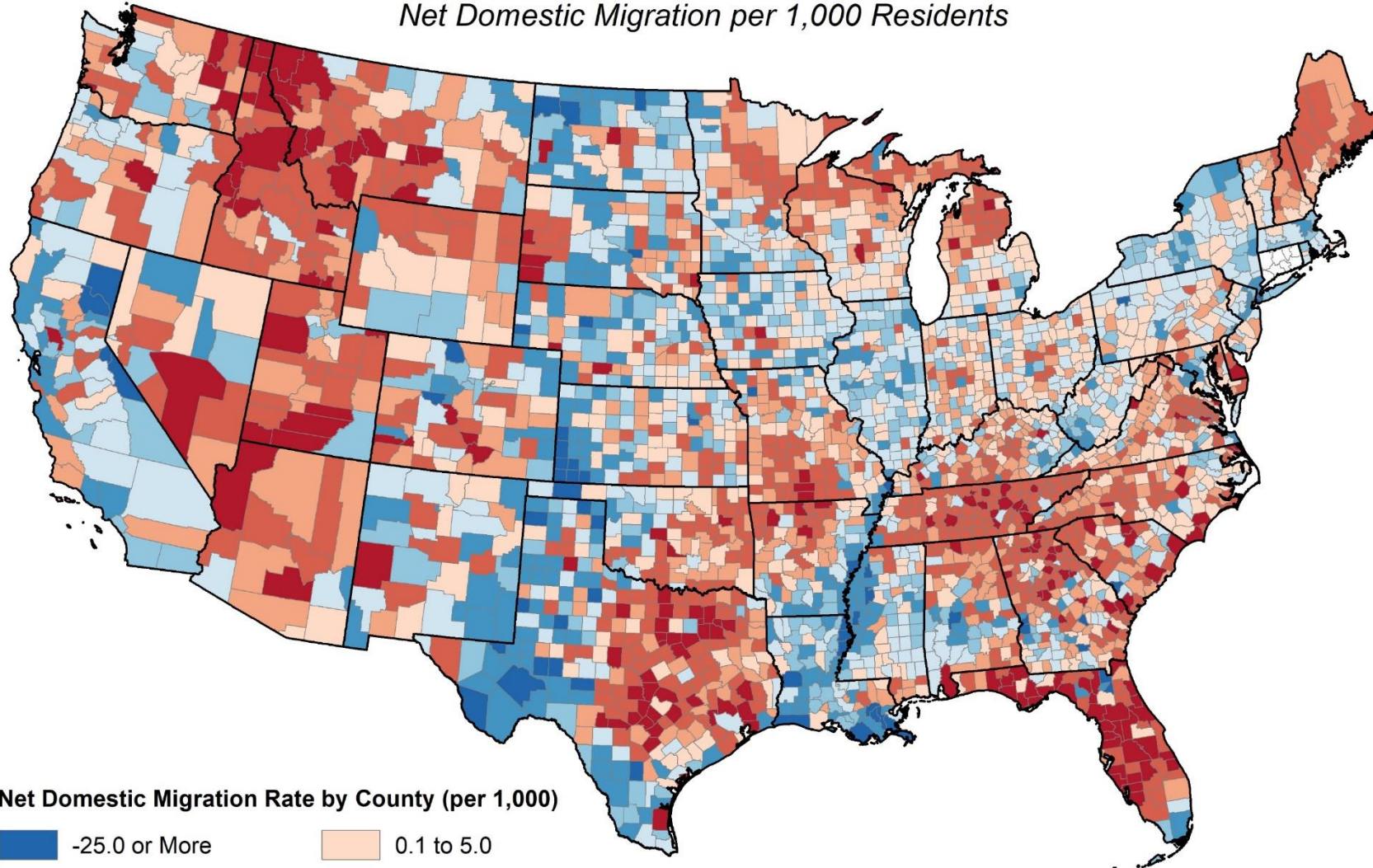- 25.1 or More

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau

Net Domestic Migration Rate by County - 2021 to 2022
Net Domestic Migration per 1,000 Residents

Net Domestic Migration Rate by County (per 1,000)

- ■ -25.0 or More
- ■ -24.9 to -10.0
- ■ -9.9 to -5.0
- ■ -4.9 to 0.0
- ■ 0.1 to 5.0
- ■ 5.1 to 10.0
- ■ 10.1 to 25.0
- ■ 25.1 or More

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau
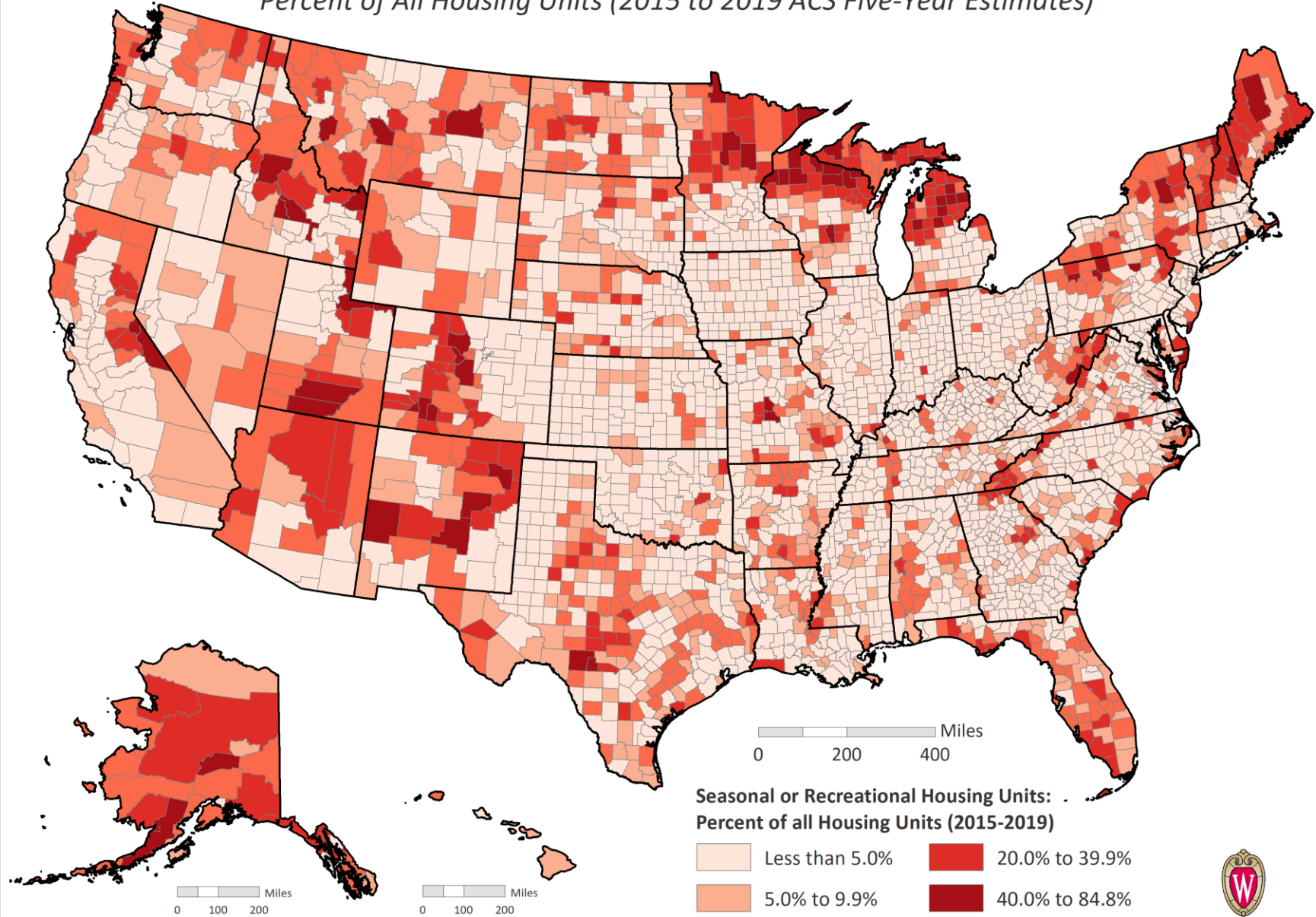
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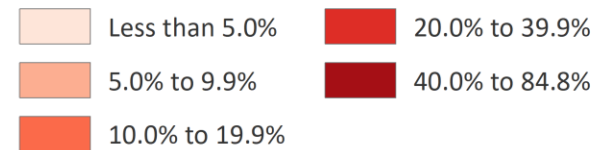1848 - 2023

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Housing Units for Seasonal, Recreational or Occasional Use by County
Percent of All Housing Units (2015 to 2019 ACS Five-Year Estimates)

Seasonal or Recreational Housing Units:
Percent of all Housing Units (2015-2019)

- Less than 5.0%
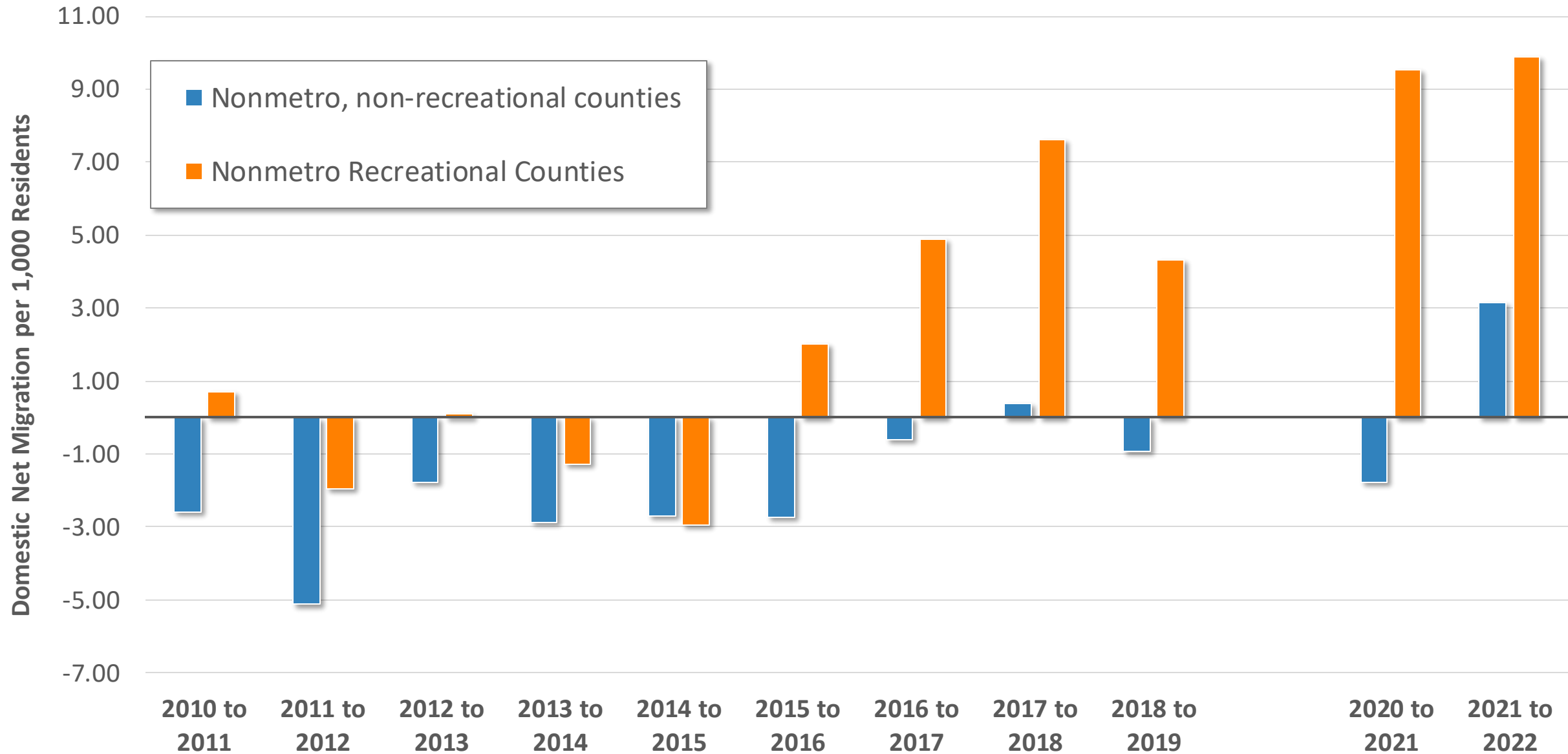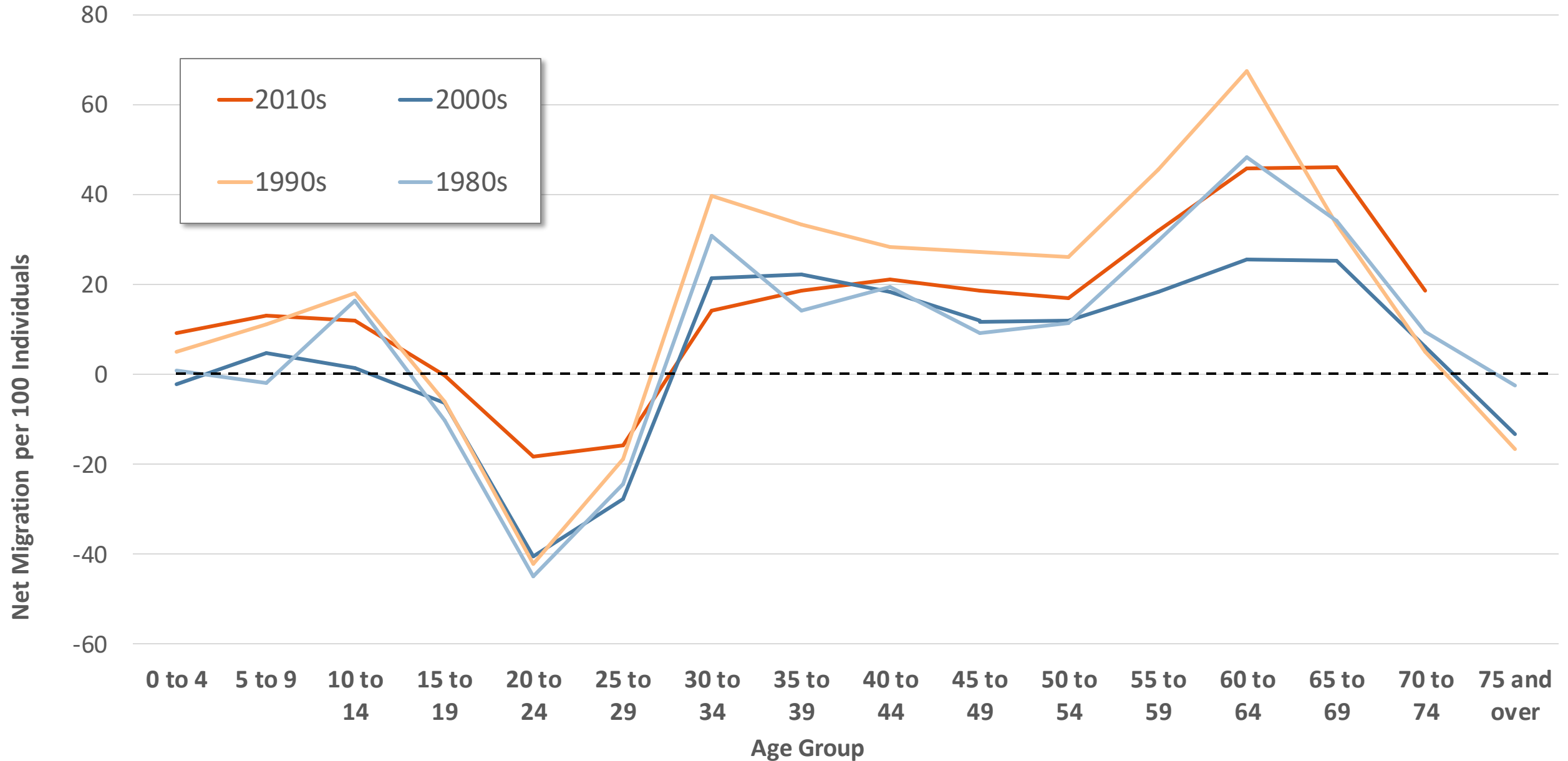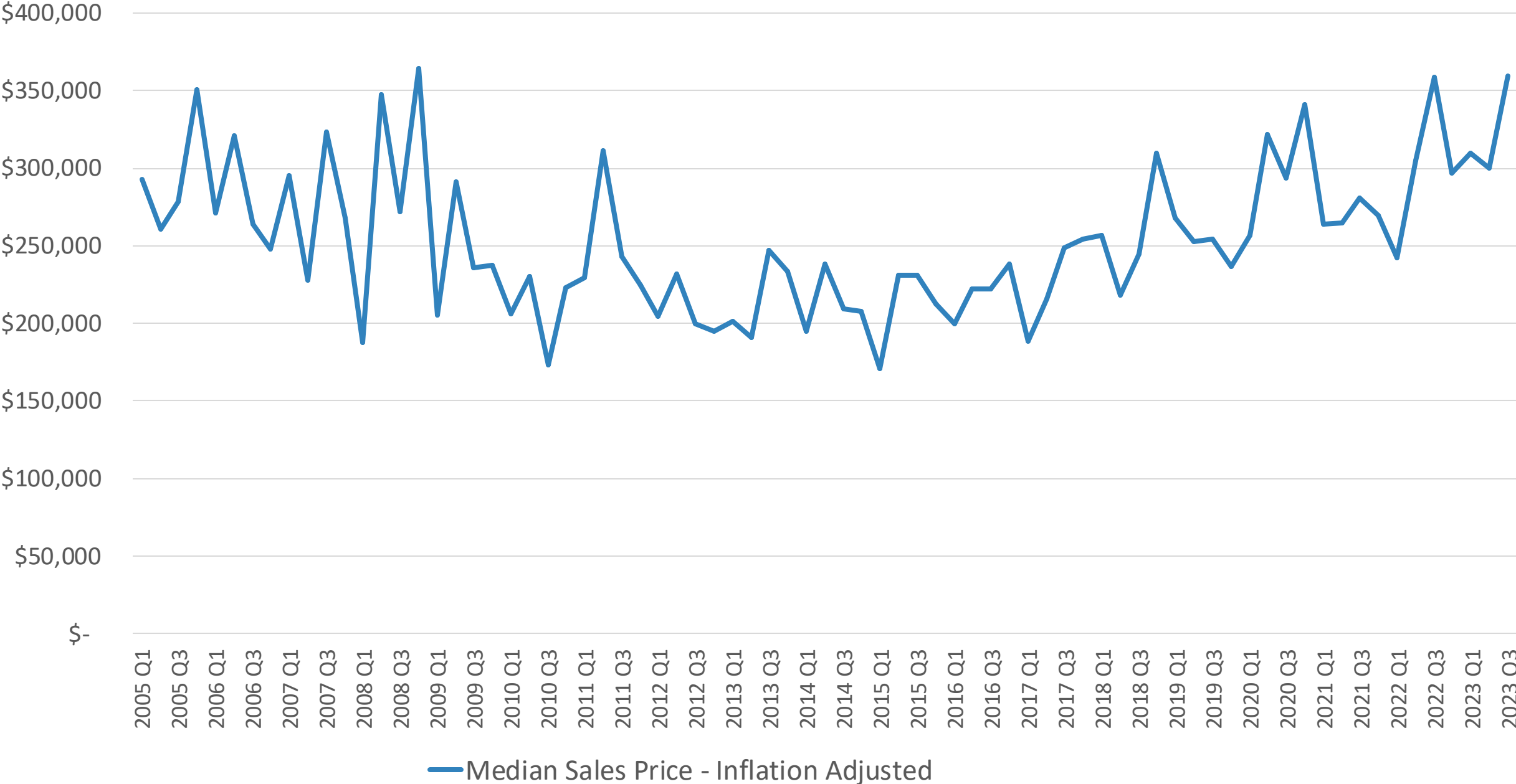- 5.0% to 9.9%
- 10.0% to 19.9%
- 20.0% to 39.9%
- 40.0% to 84.8%

Domestic Net Migration Rates 2010 to 2022 - *Wisconsin Nonmetro Recreational and Nonmetro, Non-Recreational Counties*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Author's Calculations

Sawyer County Net Migration Rate by Age Group

Legend: 2010s, 2000s, 1990s, 1980s

Y-axis: Net Migration per 100 Individuals (from -60 to 80)

X-axis: Age Group (0 to 4, 5 to 9, 10 to 14, 15 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 34, 35 to 39, 40 to 44, 45 to 49, 50 to 54, 55 to 59, 60 to 64, 65 to 69, 70 to 74, 75 and over)

Data Source: Age-Specific Net Migration Estimates for US Counties, 1950-2020. Applied Population Laboratory, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Sawyer County Median Sales Price 2005 to 2023

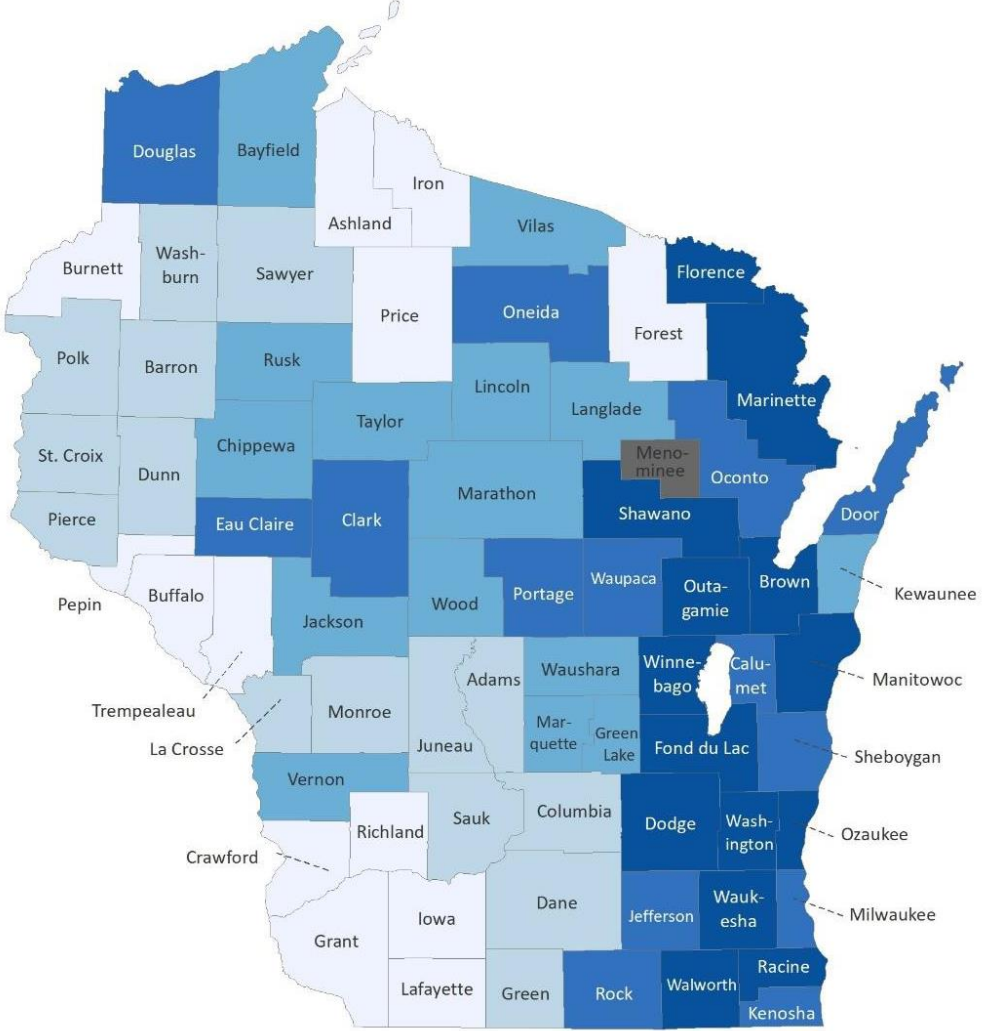Median Sales Price - Inflation Adjusted

Data Source: Wisconsin Realtors Association and Author's Calculations

Critical Institutions - The Ability to Meet Needs on a Routine Basis

- Healthcare

- Education

- Pharmacies

- Grocery stores

- Veterinary Clinics

- Childcare

- Broadband

- Banks

- Etc.

Number of Children Under Age 5 per Childcare Establishment (by Quintile)

12.2 to 20.4 (1st Quintile)	30.9 to 43.0 (4th Quintile)
20.5 to 24.8 (2nd Quintile)	43.1 to 50.6 (5th Quintile)
24.9 to 30.8 (3rd Quintile)	Data Suppressed

Creating Typologies and Potential Blueprints

- Focus specifically on livability;

- Different ways of thriving;

- Then identify a "blueprint" for each type.

Type 1: High natural amenity, older demographic, high-income, large tourism industry

Type 2: Near a metro area, strong presence of critical institutions, accessible housing

Type 3: Young demographic (families), strong presence of critical institutions, employment diversity

And so on…

Questions?

Matt Kures
Community Economic Development Specialist and Researcher

Community Development Institute
Economic Development Administration University Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension

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