

# **Rural Data for Small Businesses and Community Projects: Real-World Applications for Market Research, Grant Writing, and Advocacy**

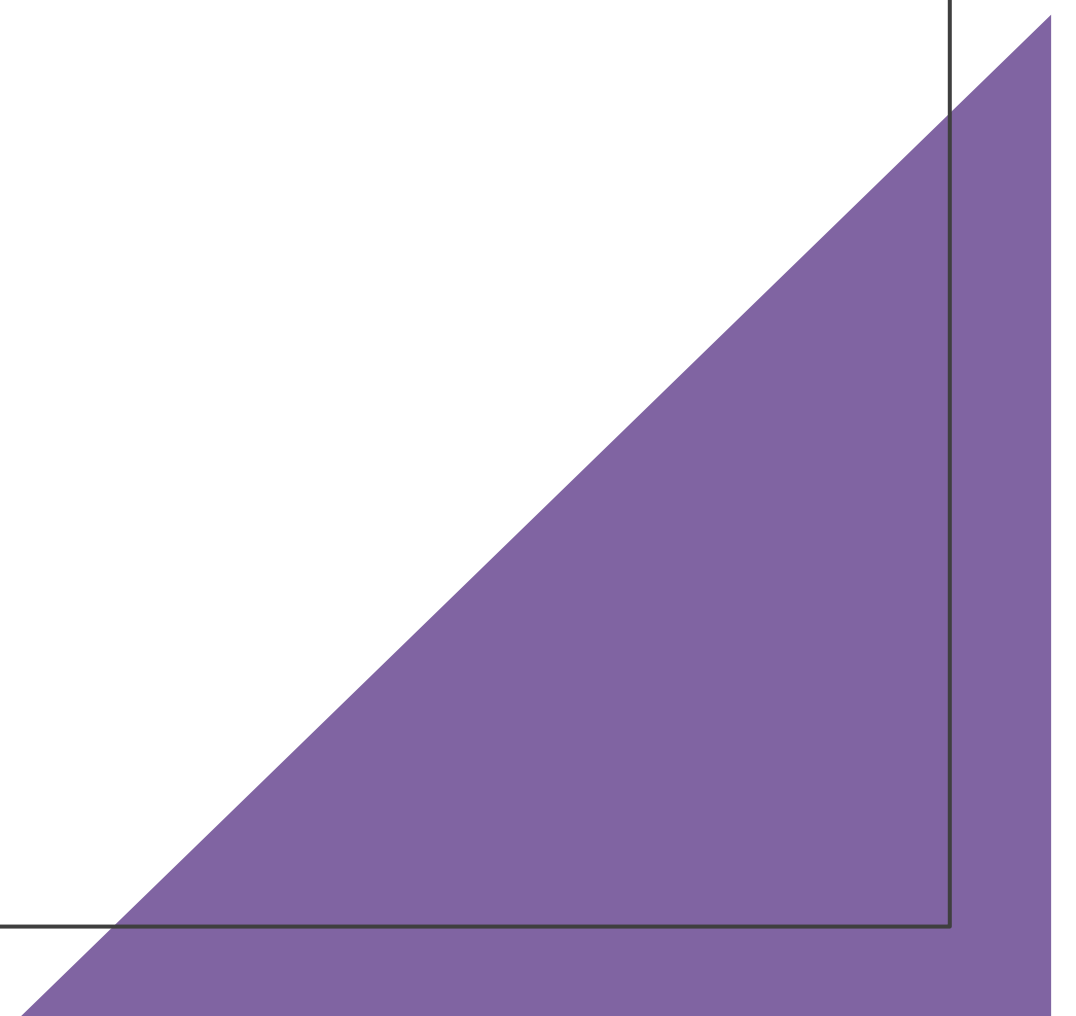
**Moderator:** Emma Spett

**Speakers:**

- Michael Moser
- Mariya Shcheglovitova
- Per Smith

# How do you use data in your business, organization, or community?

<https://www.menti.com/alfzdxhho7ep>

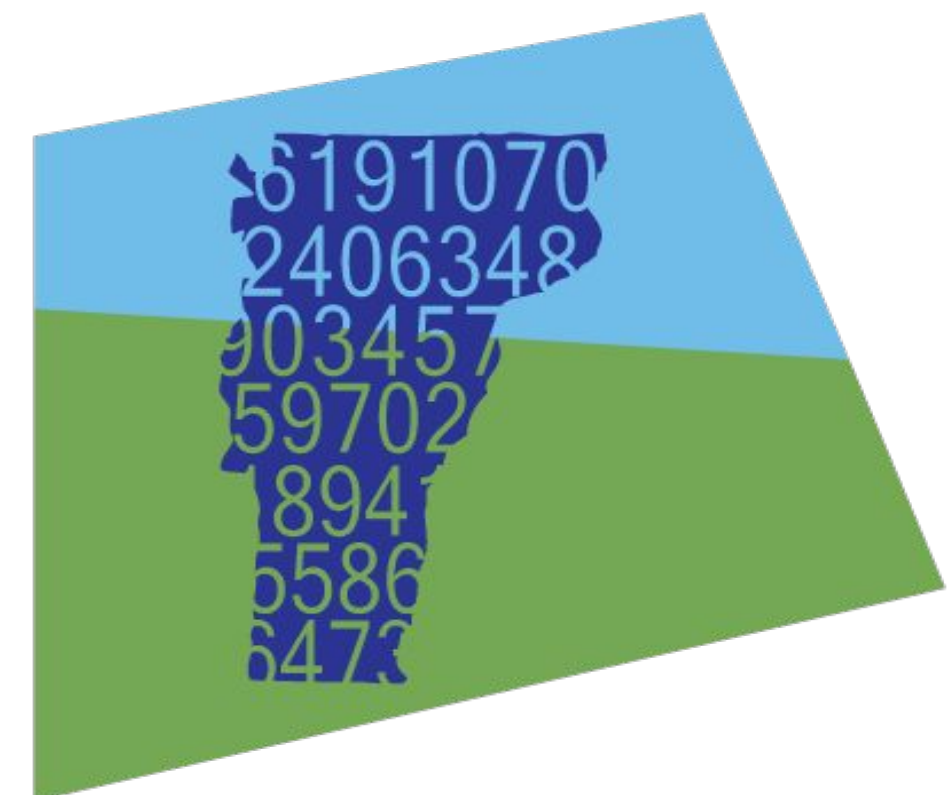






# Data for Business

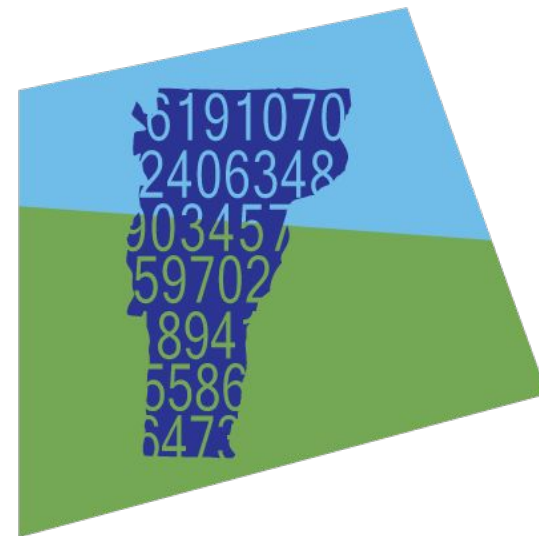
From Vermont's Census  
State Data Center





# Vermont's Census State Data Center

## What can we do for you?



### Who we Assist

- A resource for all sectors
  - Businesses
  - Service Organizations
  - State and Local Government
  - Researchers
  - Students
  - The Public
  - Everyone

### How we Assist

- Conduct Data Trainings
- Answer Data Requests
- Assist with Census Data Collection
- Advocacy & Network Development
- Represent VT Data Needs with the Census Bureau



# What's in Census Data?

- **Socio-Demographic data**
  - Population, migration, income, housing, education, occupation, well-being & much more
- **Business & Economic data**
  - Employment, wages & revenues, job creation, industry data & much more
- **Government data**
  - Employment, expenditures & more



# Census Data for Business

**Labor Force &  
Consumer Data**





## Census Data Can Help Your Business-

- Create a Business Plan
- Compare Industries
- Identify New Markets
- Determine trends by industry
- Understand the socioeconomic characteristics of your market
- Analyze ranking and growth rates of an industry
- Determine market potential



# NAICS Codes

North American Industry Classification System

Level	Code	Examples
Sector	45	Retail Trade
Sub-Sector	451	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores
Industry Group	4511	Sporting Goods, Hobby, and Musical Instrument Stores
Industry	45112	Hobby, Toy, and Game Stores
U.S. Industry	451120	Hobby, Toy, and Game Stores

# Common Indicators for Your Business

Data to Help You Reach the Right People in the Right Places

## Know Your Workforce

- Labor Force Status
- Employment & Earnings by Industry
- Employment & Earnings by Occupation

## Know Your Market

- Household Income
- Age Groups
- Population Density
- Homeownership

## Know Your Competition

- Starts and Closures
- Start Up Capital by Sector



# Data Access Tools and Resources Census Data and More



## Census Data Portal

General search tool for socio-demographic, economic and other data



## Census Business Builder

Curated business data by sector & occupation



## UVM Leahy Institute Data Services

Data request form & access to additional curated subscription-based market data





## Vermont's Census State Data Center

Data assistance requests & personalized data access and use trainings


Data.Census.Gov

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#)


**United States Census Bureau**

Search   [Advanced Search](#)

All Tables Maps Charts Profiles Pages

 **Geographies**


- Nation >
- State >**
- County >
- County Subdivision >
- Place >
- ZIP Code Tabulation Area >
- Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area >
- Census Tract >
- Block >
- Block Group >
- All Geographies >


 **Topics**

- Business and Economy >
- Education >
- Employment >
- Families and Living Arrangements >
- Government >
- Health >
- Housing >
- Income and Poverty >


**Select State**

[Hide Geographic Components](#) [Show Geographic Components](#)

 **Within other geographies**

Search State 


- ☐ Oregon
- ☐ Pennsylvania
- ☐ Rhode Island
- ☐ South Carolina
- ☐ South Dakota
- ☐ Tennessee
- ☐ Texas
- ☐ Utah
- ☐ Vermont
- ☐ Virginia
- ☐ Washington
- ☐ West Virginia
- ☐ Wisconsin
- ☐ Wyoming
- ☐ American Samoa
- ☐ Guam






# Census Business Builder


cbb.census.gov


**Census Business Development Tool: Small Business Edition**[Send Feedback](#) [FAQ](#) [Privacy Statement](#)


## Determine the Best Location for Your Business


### 1. What type of business do you want to start?


  
Construction

  
Food Services

  
Healthcare


  
Personal Services

  
Professional Services

  
Retail

Don't see your type of business listed? Click [here](#) to request that your industry be added.

### 2. Where do you plan to open the business?



 or

### 3. Start analyzing

Click the button below to view a map where you can browse the information about your potential customers and other businesses like yours.

Take me to the Map

Powered by the U.S. Census Bureau and Esri. For help using this tool, see the [CBDT Home Page](#)

Learn more about other Census Bureau data that can help grow your business, by visiting [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

# University of Vermont's Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships Data Services Program



University  
of Vermont

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**Providing economic and workforce development data  
support to community partners in Vermont**

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[www.uvm.edu/ruralpartnerships/data-services](http://www.uvm.edu/ruralpartnerships/data-services)



# Vermont's Census State Data Center



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES / THE CENTER FOR RURAL STUDIES / VERMONT'S CENSUS STATE DATA CENTER

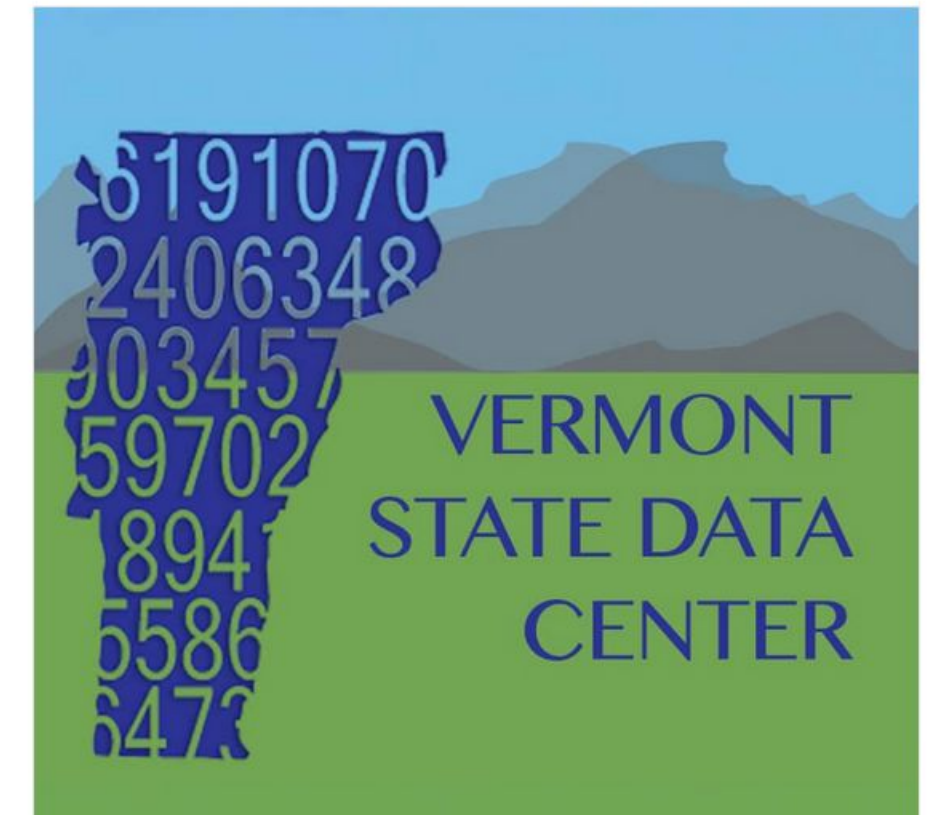
Explore



Vermont's Census State Data Center is hosted at the Center for Rural Studies. This affiliation reflects our desire to be a data resource for all Vermonters and to represent Vermont's best interests in the collection, analysis and dissemination of Census Bureau data.

## About Us

The State Data Center (SDC) Program is a cooperative program between the states and the U.S. Census Bureau to make data available locally to the public. Vermont's Census State Data Center is supported with funding from the State of Vermont.



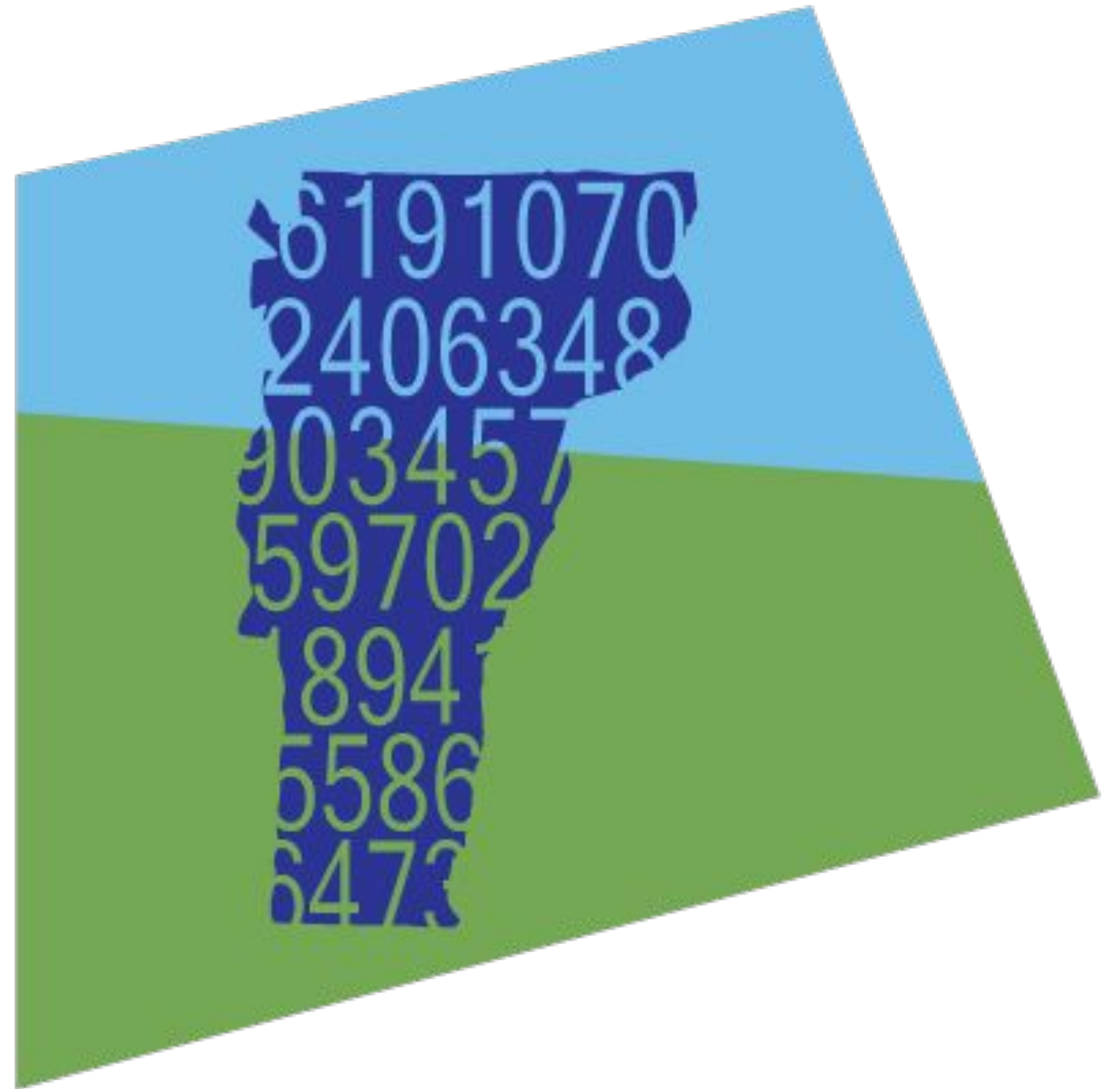
# Thank You

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## Contact

**Michael Moser**  
**VT State Data Center Coordinator**

**[Michael.Moser@uvm.edu](mailto:Michael.Moser@uvm.edu)**





# Scaling and Contextualizing Data

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MARIYA SHCHEGLOVITOVA

EXTENSION ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

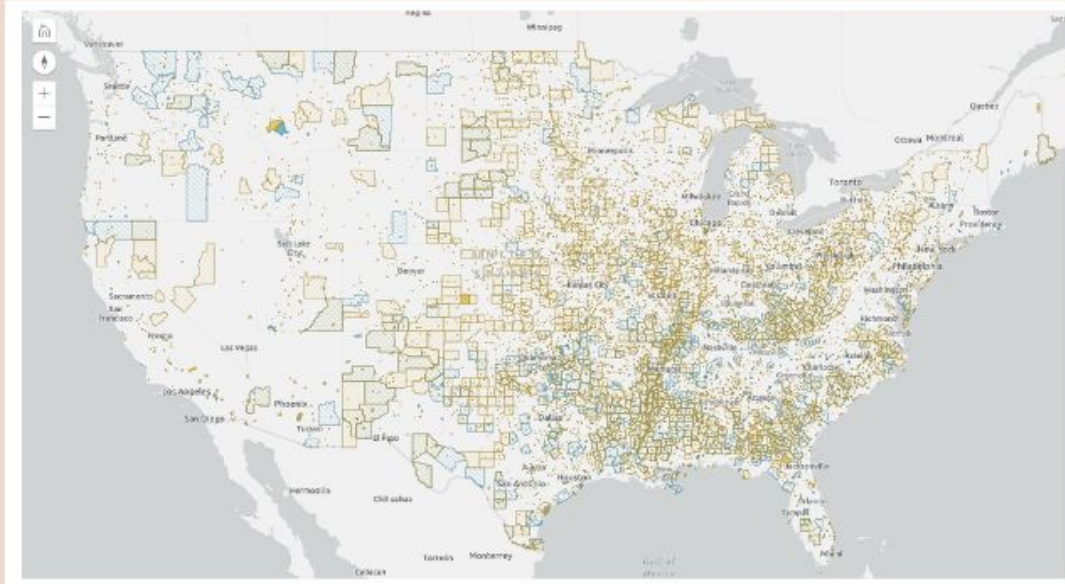


# Outline

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## Background

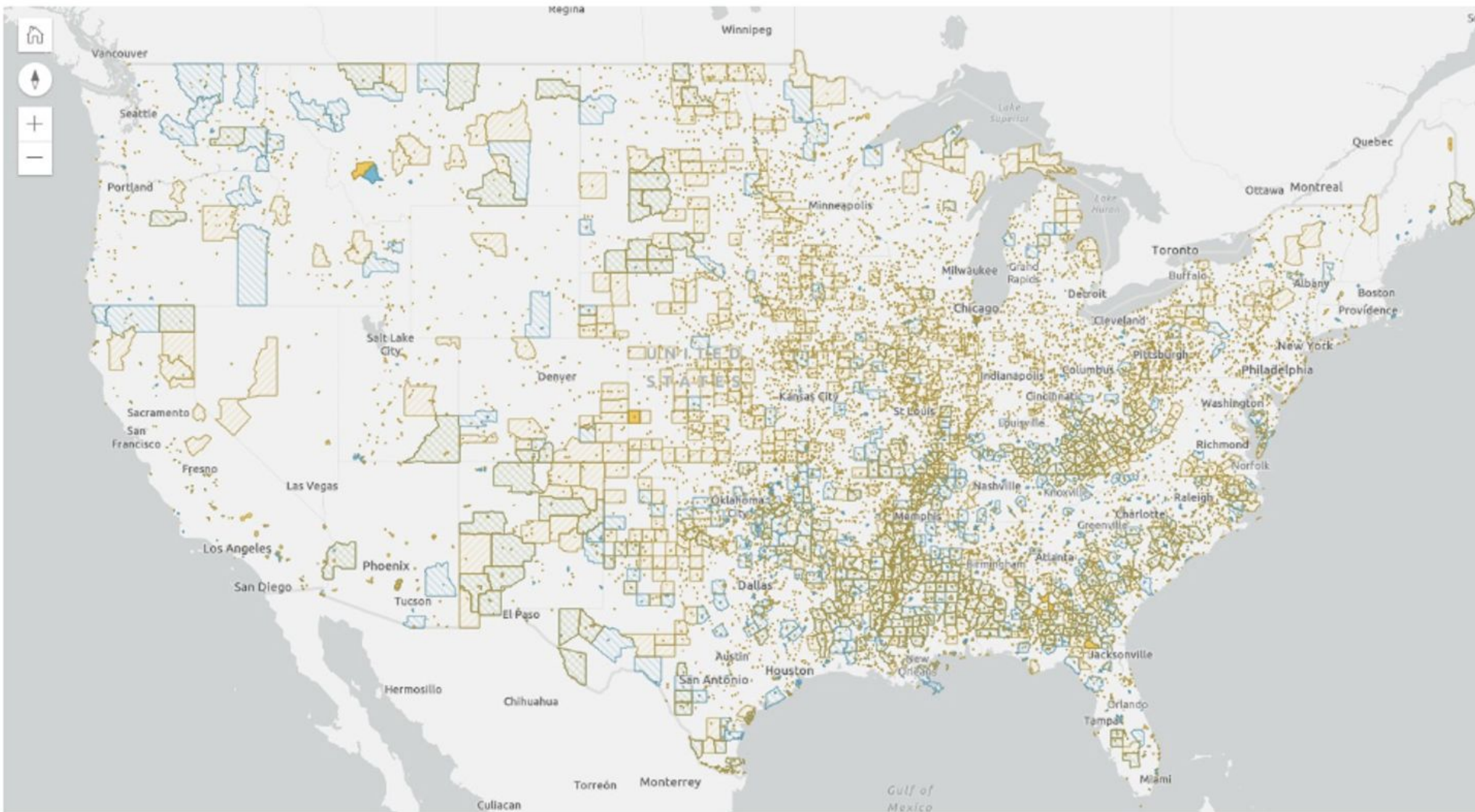


Scale/Boundaries

Quality/Accuracy

Some Recommendations





## Category 1: Economically Distressed meet one of these criteria

- Average unemployment rate of 9% or more
- Poverty rate of 15% or more among individuals not enrolled in higher education
- Population decline of 5% or more since the 2010 census

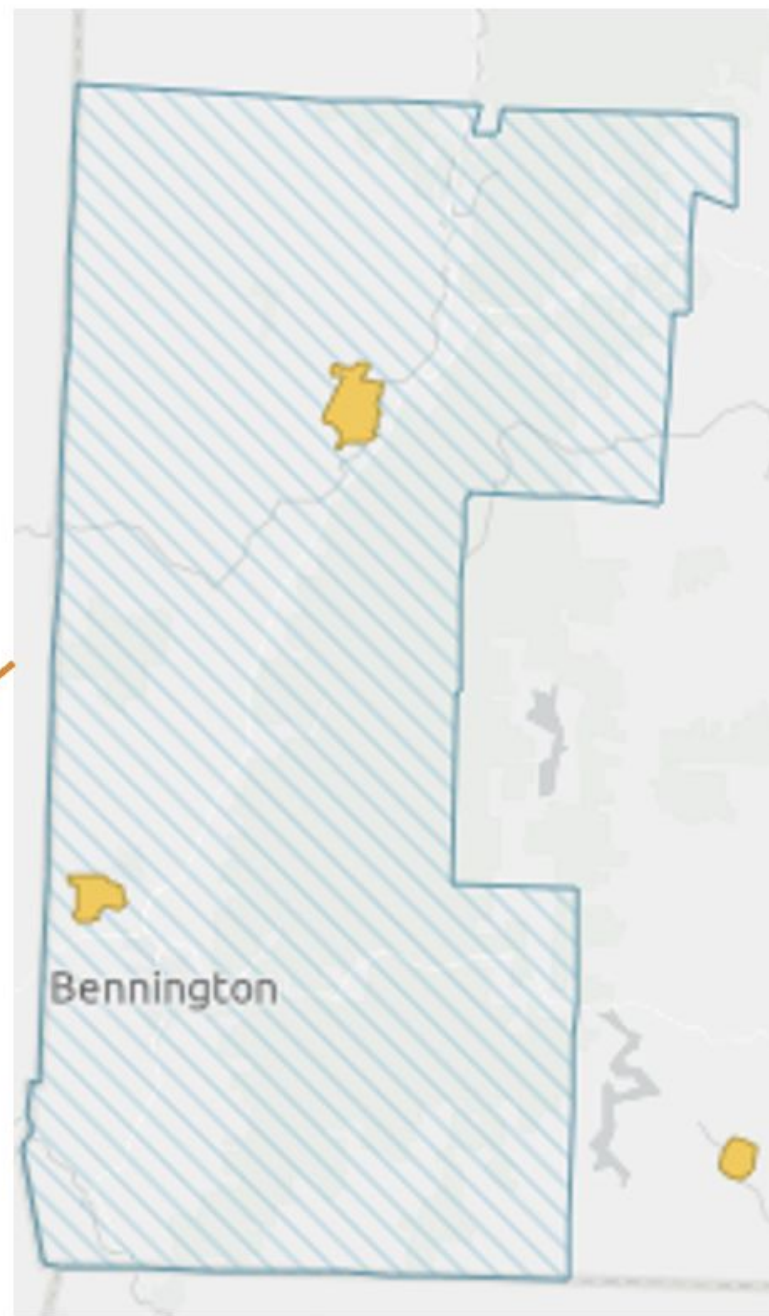
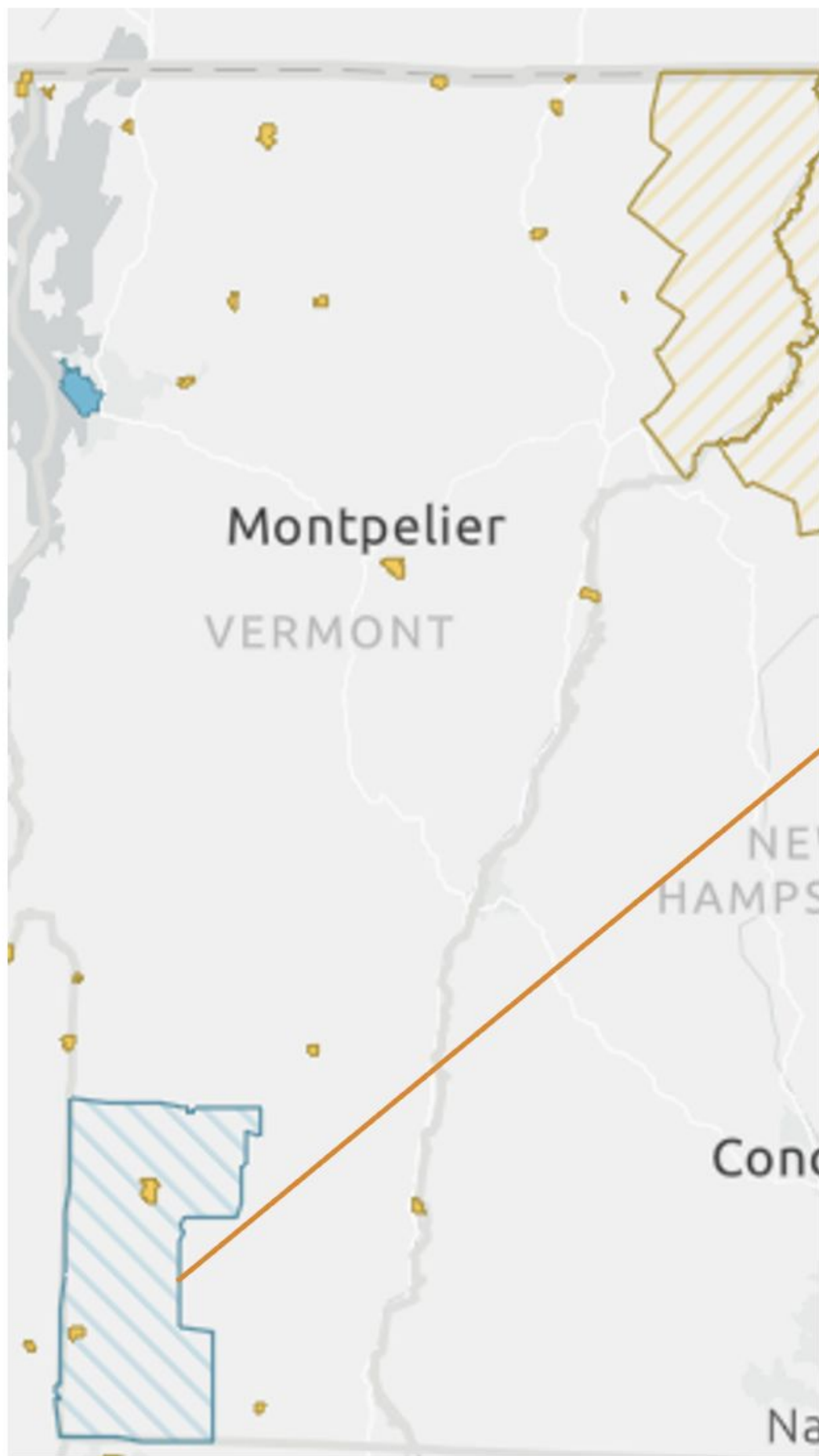
## Category 2: Experiencing Persistent Poverty

- Contain at least one persistent poverty census tract
  - A poverty rate of 20% or more over 30 years

***HUD's Distressed Cities Technical Assistance (DCTA) program provides technical assistance to entities serving communities with populations under 50,000***







## Bennington County

- Persistent Poverty

## North Bennington

- Population Loss

## Manchester Village

- Poverty  $\geq 15\%$



Community Profiles: [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov)

Census Data Explained: [censusreporter.org](https://censusreporter.org)

Poverty Thresholds: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>

*Poverty Rate: Share of the population that earns an annual income below the federally designated poverty threshold (e.g., \$32,355 for a family of 4 in 2024).*



Poverty Rate*	2010 Pop	2020 Pop	Population Change
11.4%	32,125	37,347	+16%
12.4%	9,074	8,795	-3%
13.5%	15,764	15,333	-3%



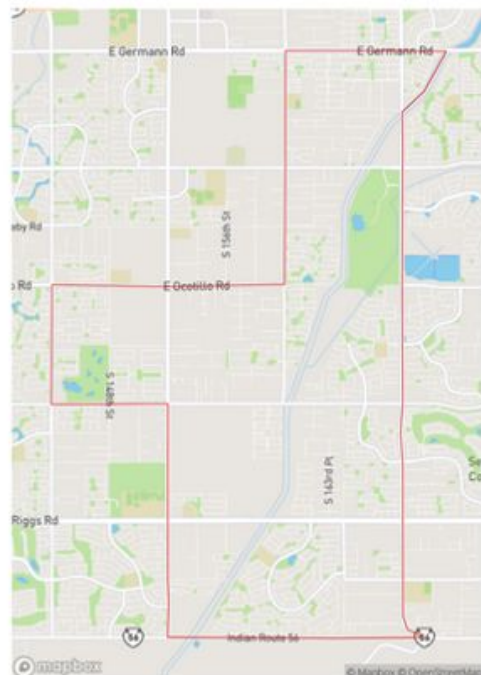
# Benefits: Comparability

Census Data is aggregated to standardized spatial units of analysis

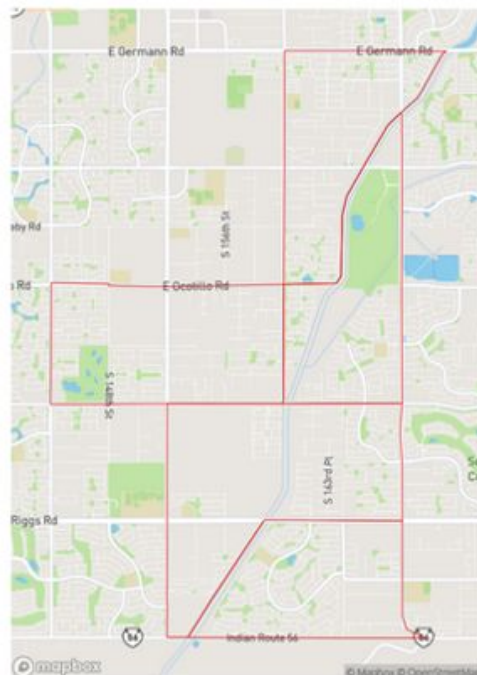
Contextualizing your community's performance by offering comparisons to peer communities and national statistics

- Define national metrics (DCTA)
- Compare an area to a reference geography (Town vs. County or State)
- Compare an area over time (Population Change, etc.)\*

2010



2020



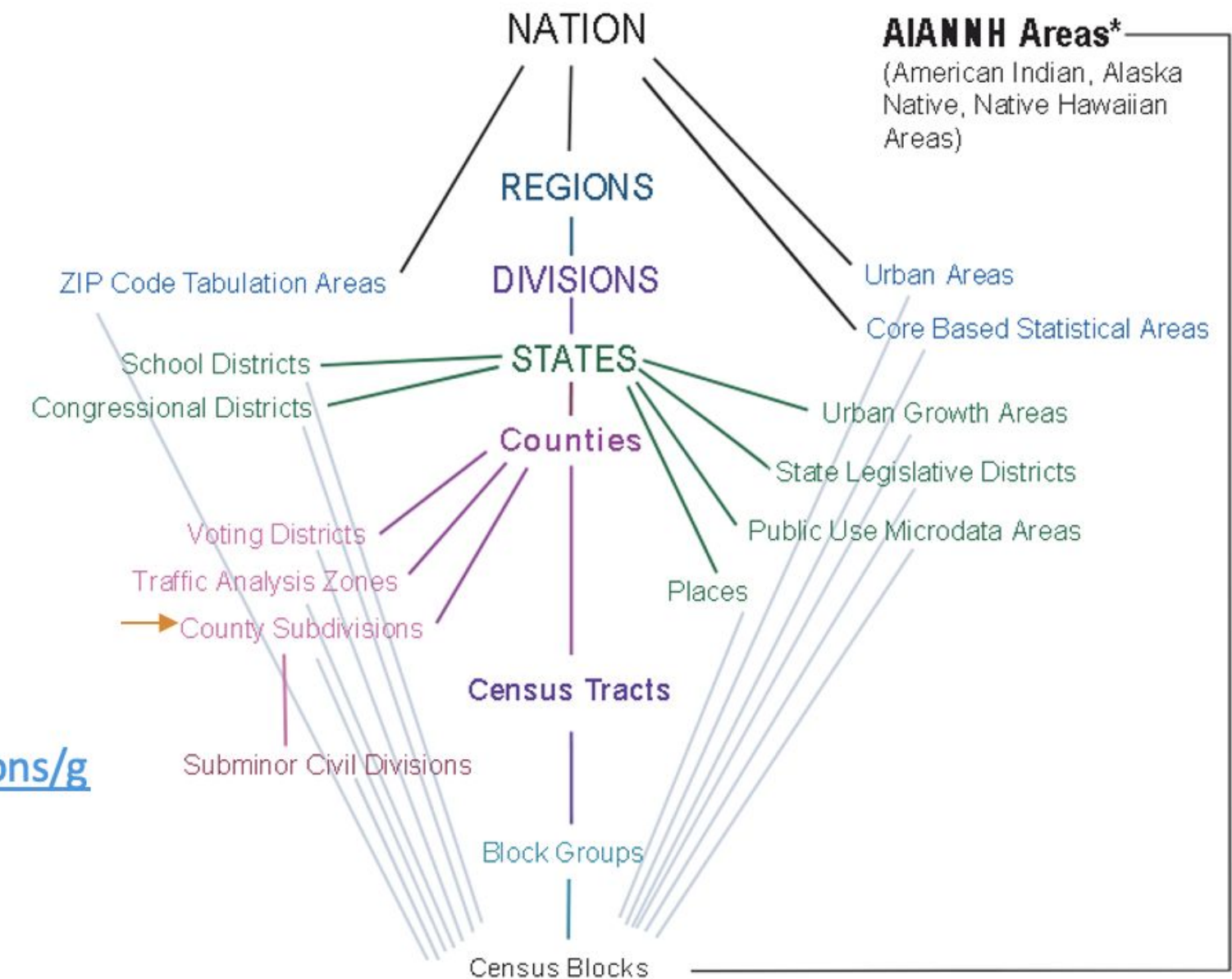
Geocorr crosswalk files:

<https://mcdc.missouri.edu/applications/geocorr.html>

IPUMS historic census data:

<https://www.nhgis.org/>

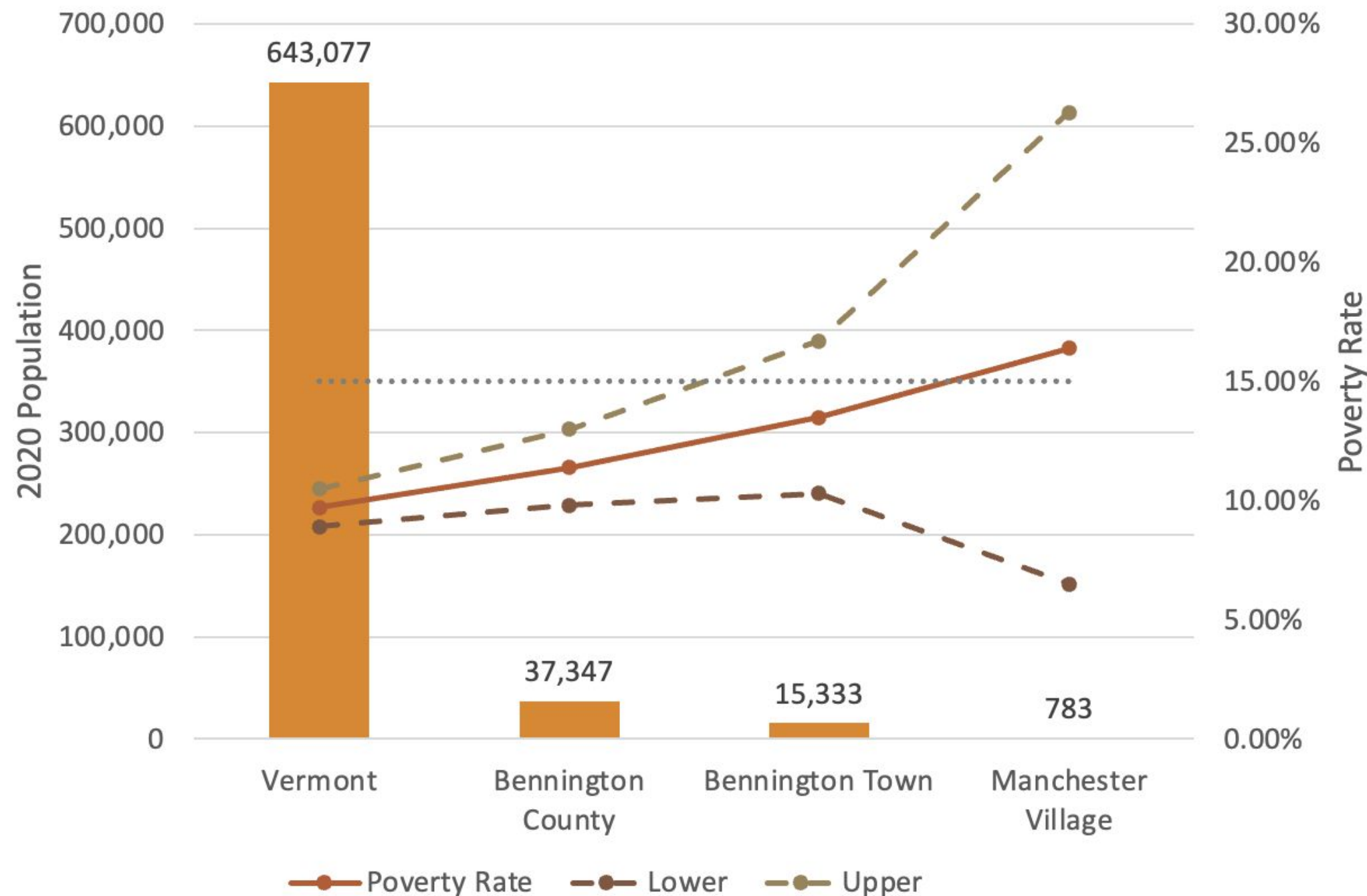
## Standard Hierarchy of Census Geographic Entities





*ACS data are estimates based on a sample rather than complete counts and are drawn from a smaller sample than the decennial census.*

# Considerations: Data Quality and Accuracy



## Poverty

**16.4% ± 9.9%**

Poverty, All people in Manchester village, Vermont

**9.7% ± 0.8%**

Poverty, All people in Vermont

[S1701](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Poverty

**13.5% ± 3.2%**

Poverty, All people in Bennington town, Bennington County, Vermont

**11.4% ± 1.6%**

Poverty, All people in Bennington County, Vermont

[S1701](#) | 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

# Working With Uncertainty

Articles

## Navigating Statistical Uncertainty: How Urban and Regional Planners Understand and Work With American Community Survey (ACS) Data for Guiding Policy

Jason R. Jurjevich , Amy L. Griffin  , Seth E. Spielman , David C. Folch , Meg Merrick  & Nicholas N. Nagle 

Pages 112-126 | Published online: 05 Apr 2018

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2018.1440182>



## Improving Equitable Representation in Program Eligibility Data

Tracey Farrigan

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

Mariya Shcheglovitova

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research

*“Just 27% of the planners we surveyed indicated they would warn the end user about unreliable ACS data.”*

*Using MOEs as an inclusive strategy in program eligibility metrics “results in greater representation of underserved communities, including smaller population areas and those characterized by poverty among historically marginalized populations.”*

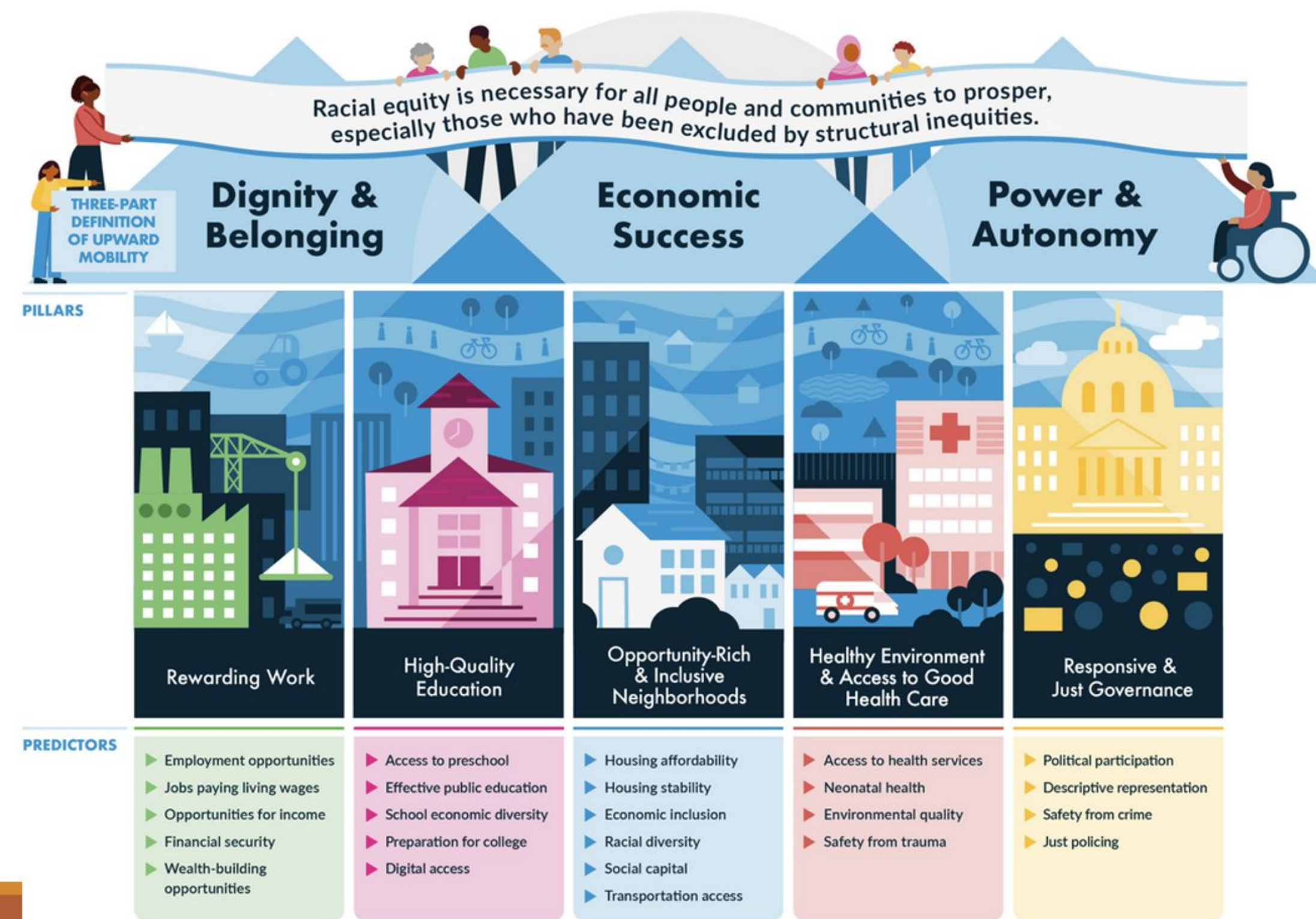
- Report the MOE of ACS estimates
- Provide context for the (un)reliability of ACS data
- Conduct a test of statistical significance when comparing ACS estimates over time.
- If you don't see your community represented in national datasets don't take it at face value – check the data



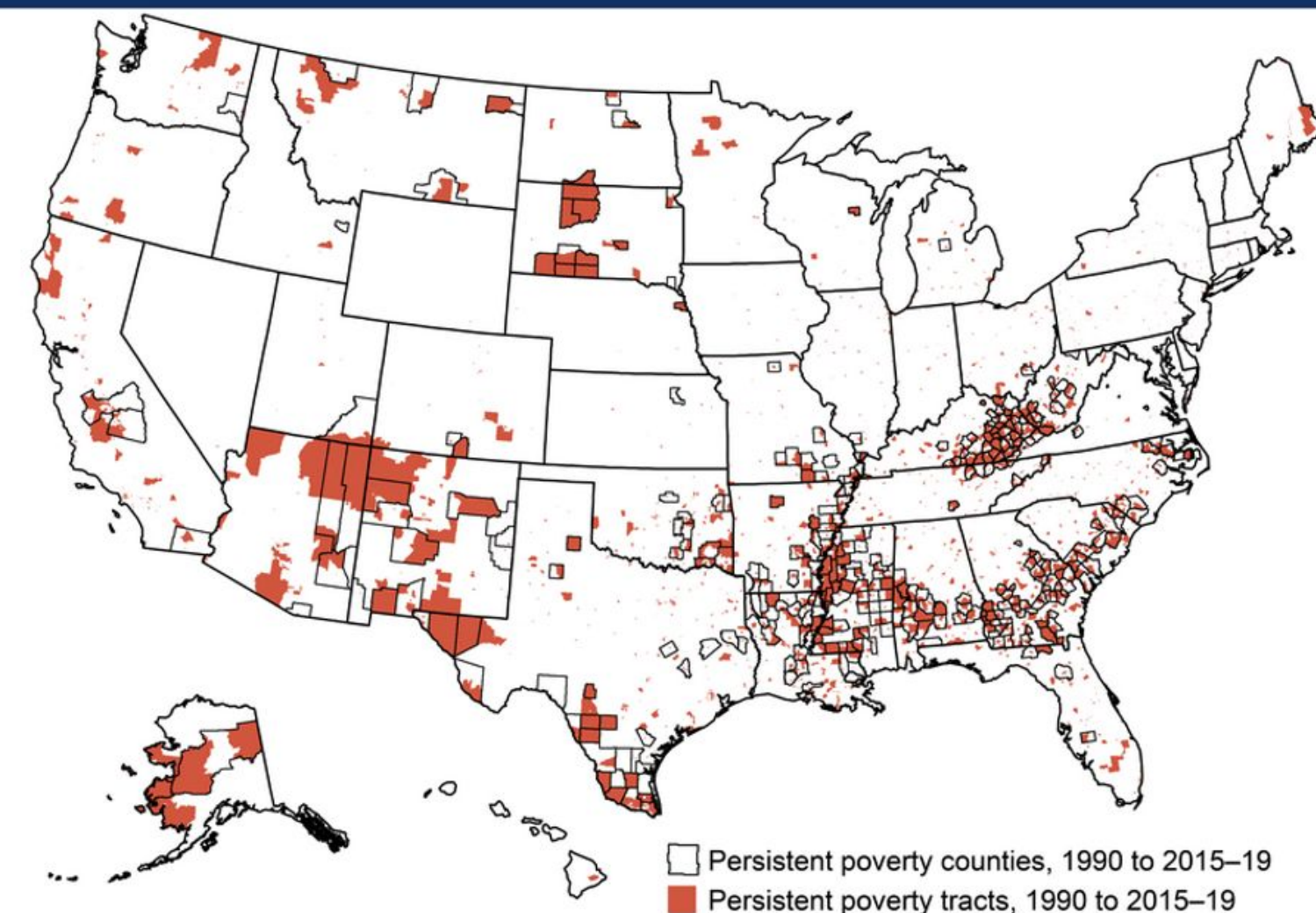
Urban Institute Upward Mobility Dashboard: <https://upward-mobility.urban.org/dashboard>

USDA Poverty Area Measures: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/poverty-area-measures/descriptions-and-maps>

# Process vs. Outcome Measures



Persistent poverty counties and census tracts, 2015–19



Note: Persistent poverty counties and tracts had poverty rates of 20.0 percent or higher in 4 consecutive measurement periods spanning approximately 30 years. Codes for 2015–19 are unofficial research measures and will be updated to 2017–21 when those data are available. Source: USDA Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census and 2007–11 and 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, and GeoLytics' Neighborhood Change Database (NCDB).



# Contextual Analysis

Analyzing the many overlapping factors and local contexts that influence evidence-based policy decisions.

The greater political atmosphere

Meeting minutes

Regulatory Documents

Historical Background

Oral histories

Archives

Historic census data

Relationship between public institutions and various relevant stakeholders

Mapping stakeholder and institutional networks and relationships

organizational capacity, staffing and expertise

Key stakeholder interviews

Local culture and sense of place

Artwork

Folklore

financial, technological, and infrastructural resources

Budget analysis

Asset mapping

**Triangulation:** using multiple sources to enrich an understanding of a location or research topic.



# From Data to Insights: The Market Research Approach



Per Smith

Insights Association  
North Atlantic  
Chapter  
&  
Triangulum Insights



# When are data-driven insights valuable?

**When you need to make important business decisions based on more than assumptions**

**For instance, when trying to...**

- Identify opportunities in the market
- Understand your competitors
- Improve your products and services
- Enhance the customer experience
- Optimize price
- Test your new ideas
- Create better marketing strategies
- Keep track of your performance
- Keep track of impactful trends
- Optimize the allocation of resources
- Improve access to funding



Research



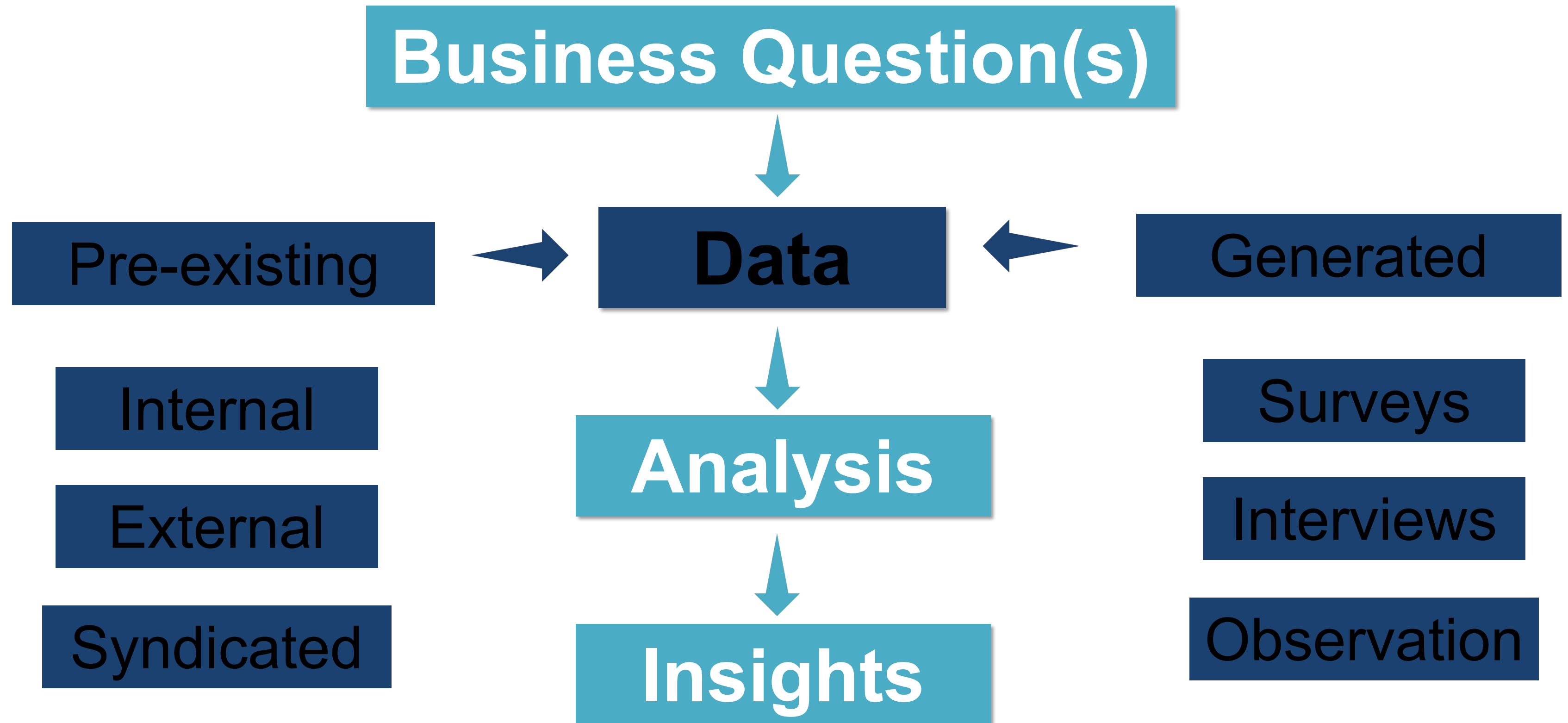
Insights



Decision

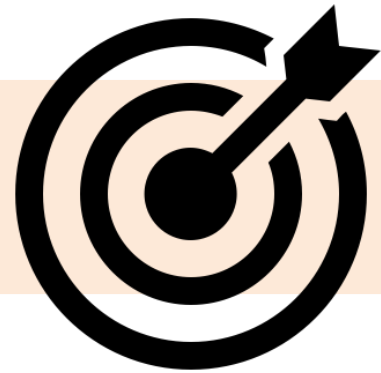


# How does market research leverage data for insight?





# How do different sources of data contribute to insights?



## Business Objective

- Launch a new product
- Improve customer retention
- Optimize pricing
- Enhance customer experience

## Leverage Existing Data

- Analyze sales trends to identify gaps
- Identify churn patterns from your CRM
- Review historical sales by price point
- Track NPS and usage behavior

## Generate Data

- Conduct concept testing and gauge interest
- Understand reasons for dissatisfaction via surveys
- Test pricing sensitivity in market research
- Run focus groups to explore deeper emotional drivers

# The data you get is only as good as the questions you ask

## Business Problem

A local movie theater with a dip in patronage needs to increase sales.

## Business Problem

An entrepreneur needs to beef up their business plan for investors.

1. Ask the right, focused questions.
2. Understand the business decision at stake.
3. Set specific, actionable goals.
4. Identify what needs to be measured or tested.
5. Limit the scope to keep it manageable.
6. Craft a clear, purpose-driven objective statement.



# Sometimes research uncovers the unexpected.

## Business Problem

An established national retailer needs to better understand customer feedback around cleanliness and checkout speeds to make sure it doesn't impact their bottom line.

### Customer feedback data indicated unhappiness around:



1. Lack of cleanliness/order in store
2. Dissatisfaction with the speed of checkout despite installing new self-checkout kiosks

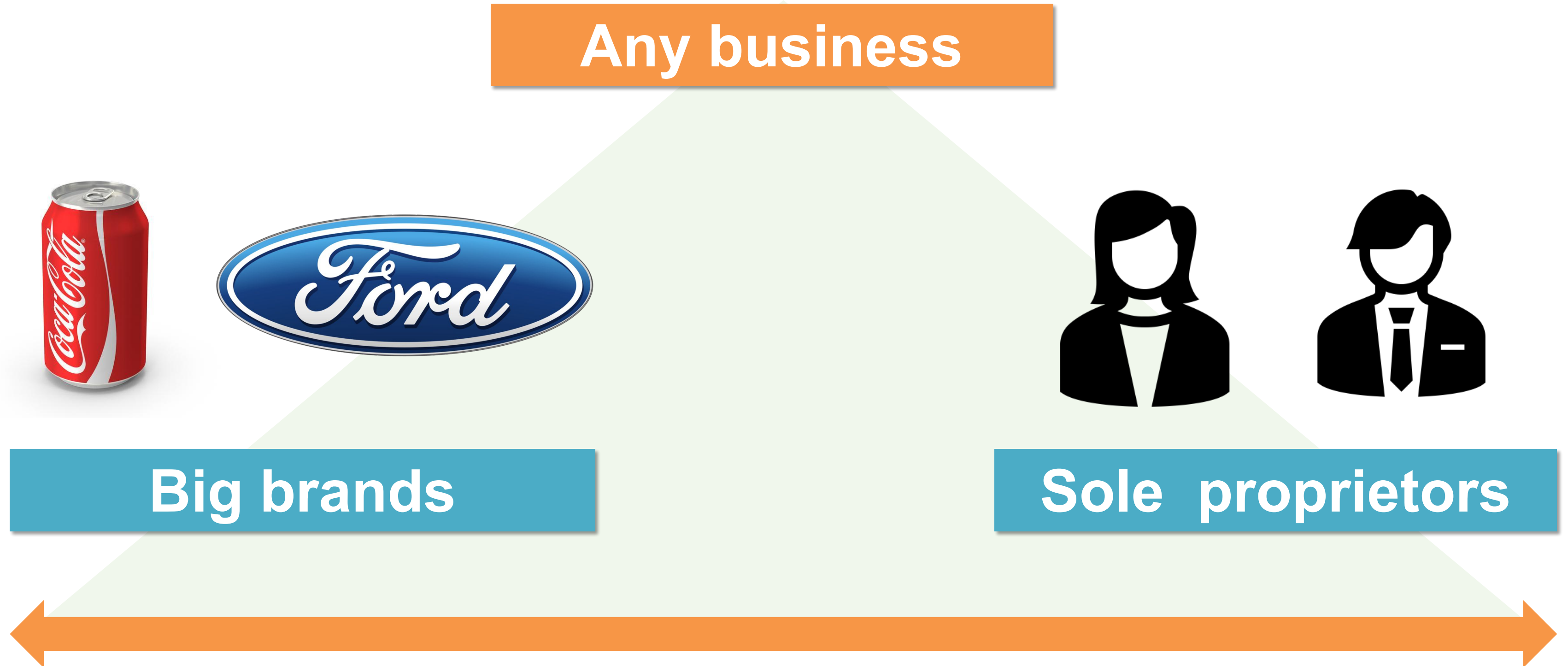
**Additional Context:** Worried about customer retention because of established correlation with (un)happiness

### Custom research questions:



3. How are store cleanliness and trip speed impacting overall shopping trip happiness?
4. What areas of opportunity are there to improve happiness?

# Who can benefit from market research?





# Thank You



## Per Smith

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Board Member - IANA  
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(617) 308-8409





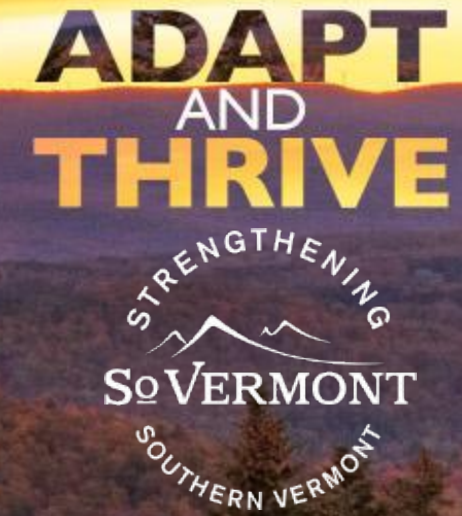
Questions for our  
panelists?



# Data challenges, resources, and opportunities in Vermont

<https://www.menti.com/alfzdxhho7ep>

# UP NEXT:



- Late-Afternoon Sessions 3:10 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
  - Business Transitions Networking Opportunity (Grand Summit Ballroom - Front)
  - Capacity for Your Community Project: TA Providers Roundtable (Harriman's Restaurant)
  - Beige Book Breakout: Regional Economic Update with the Boston Fed (Deerfield South)
  - Encouraging Developments in Housing (Deerfield North)
  - Change Management: Roundtable Discussion (Raconda West)
  - Supporting Our Region's Rising Workforce: From Young Professionals to Remote Workers to Newcomers (Raconda South)
- Federal Delegation Update (Somerset Ballroom) 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Closing Reception (Somerset Ballroom) 4:30 p.m.