

## COVID-19 FAQs

### 2022 County Health Rankings

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**Q: Are COVID-19 deaths included in the 2022 Rankings?**

**A:** Yes. The 2022 Rankings data communicate deaths recorded through the end of 2020, including deaths attributed to COVID-19. These deaths are reflected in the ranked measure of premature death (YPLL), and the unranked measures of life expectancy, premature age-adjusted mortality, child mortality, infant mortality, and COVID-19 age-adjusted mortality. The 2022 Rankings do not include deaths attributed to COVID-19 during 2021 or 2022. To see the years of data used for all measures please visit our [2022 Measures](#).

**Q: Where can I find the number of COVID-19 deaths in my county in 2020?**

**A:** County Health Rankings has introduced two options for viewing COVID-19 deaths in the 2022 Rankings county snapshots.

1. Premature Death: The ⓘ icon to the left of the county value will open a pop-up box housing the five leading causes of death before age 75 from 2020. Deaths attributed to COVID-19 before age 75 will also be displayed in this table.
2. COVID-19 age-adjusted mortality: A temporary, unranked measure of all COVID-19 mortality from 2020 has been added to the county snapshot. This measure is an age-adjusted rate which allows for comparisons across counties with differing age-structures; the absolute number of deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2020 will be accessible in the data table for this measure. This temporary measure will remain available for as long as COVID-19 persists as an important focus of community health.

**Q: What does age-adjusted mean?**

**A:** Age-adjustment makes measures comparable across counties even when the age structures within the counties are different from each other. This is important because we know that severe outcomes from COVID-19 are closely tied to age.

**Q: Does my 2022 rank reflect the impact COVID-19 has had on my county?**

**A:** As in previous years, Years of potential life lost before age 75 (YPLL-75) accounts for 50% of the CHR&R health outcomes rank. COVID-19 deaths occurring in the county population before age 75 contribute to this metric. Although an explicit COVID-19 death measure is not ranked, the impact of COVID-19 is captured through YPLL-75. In addition to deaths, the pandemic impacted many health factors. Please visit our [2022 Measures](#) to review the data years used for each. Certain measures such as unemployment, children in poverty, and median household income are based on a single year of data (2020 data in the 2022 Rankings) and may reflect pandemic-induced changes.

**Q: Were any data sources affected by the pandemic?**

**A:** The American Community Survey was delayed and received fewer responses due to the pandemic. Following the pandemic-related data collection disruptions, the Census Bureau revised its methodology to reduce nonresponse bias in data collected in 2020. After evaluating the effectiveness of this methodology, the Census Bureau determined the resulting data are fit for public release, government and business uses, and understanding the social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population and economy. [Visit the Census Bureau updates for more information.](#)

***Q: Why aren't COVID-19 deaths from 2021 and 2022 included in the 2022 Rankings?***

**A:** The County Health Rankings include death data from the finalized National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) dataset, which is released annually at the end of the following year after careful review of all death records for completeness and quality. Data platforms reporting more real-time death data use provisional death data, which are subject to change as data become more complete. As a result, provisional death data are expected to differ from the final data. Final data are the most accurate and complete data available and are also comparable across states with different speed and practices in death reporting. [More information of COVID-19 data from NCHS is available here.](#)

***Q: Where should I go for the latest COVID-19 data?***

**A:** County Health Rankings encourages users to visit their state and local health department resources for the most up-to-date information on COVID-19.

There are also helpful resources on the County Health Rankings COVID-19 page that can be useful to community leaders, practitioners, and policymakers navigating the path to an inclusive and equitable recovery including:

- The US COVID Atlas - a robust data resource measuring everything from the number of COVID-19 cases, deaths, vaccinations, and hospitalizations, to information such as the locations of community clinics. The tool connects COVID-19 case data and community indicators nationwide from the beginning of the pandemic to today.
- A searchable list of evidence-informed strategies from What Works for Health to help communities respond to and recover from COVID-19.

***Q: What new things did the pandemic reveal about the topics you cover in the report?***

**A:** The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest public health crisis in more than a century, with wide-ranging negative impacts on the social and economic health of the nation that could stretch over decades. The pandemic exposed the advantages available to some groups in the country at the expense of others, and the topics we focus on this year highlight these disparities. But the pandemic also revealed opportunities. By highlighting these topics and the disparities associated with them, we're hopeful that we can turn the tide toward a system where individuals and families can meet their basic needs with dignity, regardless of their circumstances.

***Q: Does the data say whether these things have worsened since the pandemic?***

**A:** We're still emerging from the pandemic. With the nature of large-scale data available for the complex measures we look at, it will take time to fully understand how the pandemic affected us. However, we chose to include these new measures in our model because the pandemic shed light on how historical and present-day systems of oppression continue to exacerbate disparities in these areas of American society. It has also shown us how important a living wage, gender pay equity, affordable and accessible childcare and well-funded schools will be to making a just recovery.