



# Well-Being Across the U.S.

After measuring declines in overall well-being in 2017, which have continued in 2018, well-being improvement in some states, as well as gains in physical well-being at the national level offer some signs of hope. With our partners – both in the public and private sectors – we’re eager to effect more positive change as we continue to study well-being across the country.

Looking ahead, our work will introduce evolved measurements and methods to provide further context on why and how well-being trends emerge, and moreover, that Sharecare is democratizing these data and insights to enhance our own interventions as well as public health interventions at large.

– Jeff Arnold,  
Founder & CEO,  
Sharecare

The Sharecare Well-Being Index, which includes more than 2.8 million surveys, captures how people feel about and experience their daily lives. This report examines well-being across the nation, including how well-being varies by state and which states lead and lag across the five elements of well-being:

- **Purpose:** liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social:** having supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial:** managing your economic life to increase security and reduce stress
- **Community:** liking where you live, feeling safe, and having pride in your community
- **Physical:** having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

In 2018, the range of well-being scores across states expanded, widening the gap between well-being achieved in the top and bottom states nationally by over 2 points – from a range of 5.3 in 2017 to a range of 7.6 in 2018. While improvements in well-being for top-performing states like Hawaii contributed in part to this increased range, the majority was due to declines in bottom-ranked states, representing a continued decline in overall well-being in the U.S. that started in 2017.

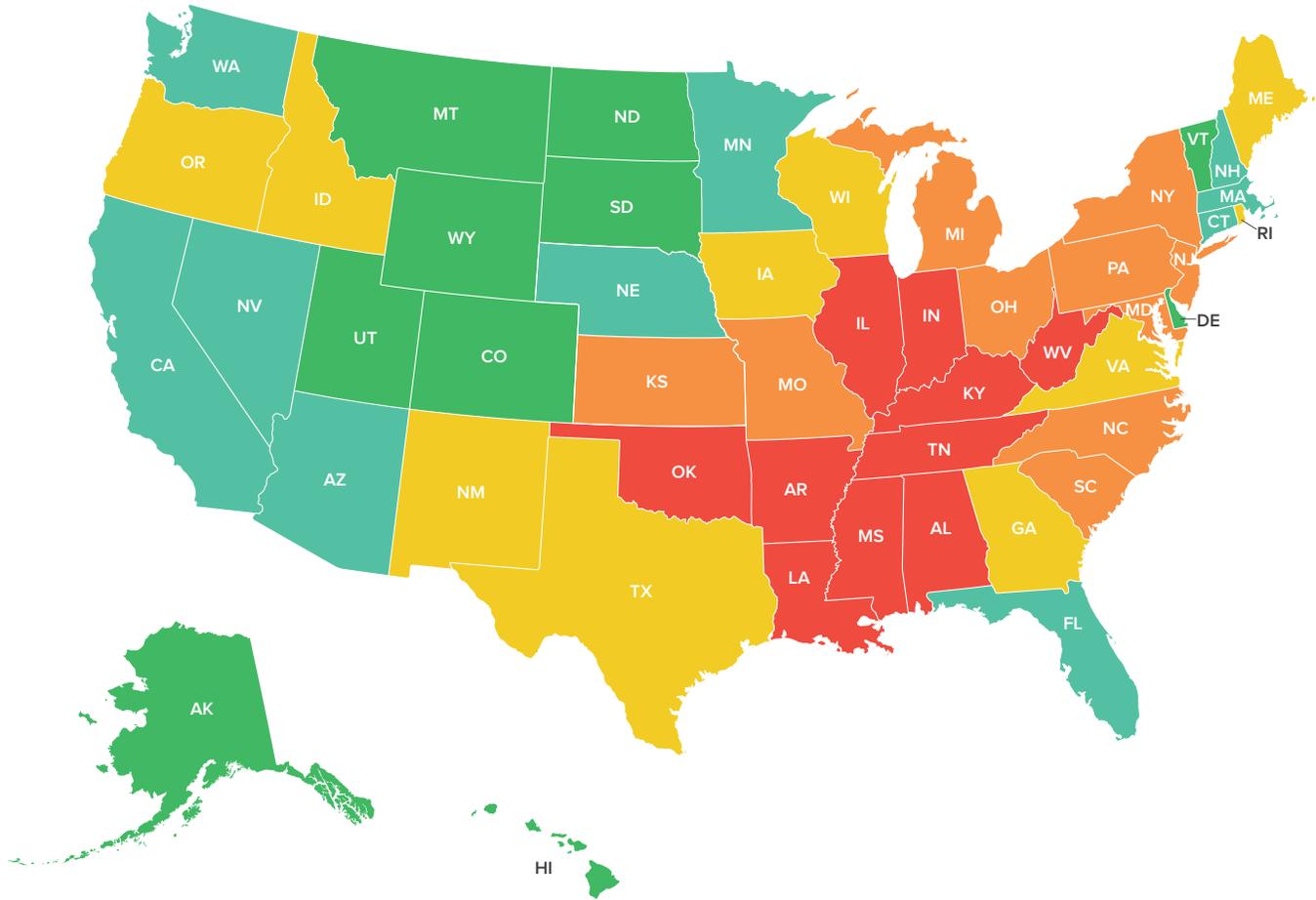
In the top states, Hawaii regained its position at the top with a well-being score of 64.6 – 0.5 points higher than South Dakota’s top score in 2017. Other top ranked states in 2018 include Wyoming and Alaska – neither of which ranked in the top 10 in the prior year’s rankings.

In the bottom states, West Virginia exhibited the lowest levels of well-being for the 10th year in a row, including a decline in well-being by almost 2 points since 2017. Other states at the bottom include Kentucky and Arkansas, both of which also ranked in the bottom 10 in the 2017 rankings.

## Top 10 and Bottom 10 States by Overall Well-Being Score, 2018

Top States		Bottom States	
1. Hawaii	64.6	41. Indiana	60.3
2. Wyoming	64.2	42. Illinois	60.3
3. Alaska	63.9	43. Louisiana	60.0
4. Montana	63.5	44. Alabama	59.9
5. Utah	63.4	45. Oklahoma	59.8
6. Colorado	63.4	46. Tennessee	59.5
7. Vermont	63.3	47. Mississippi	58.9
8. Delaware	62.9	48. Kentucky	58.8
9. South Dakota	62.7	49. Arkansas	58.7
10. North Dakota	62.7	50. West Virginia	57.0

# 2018 State Well-Being Rankings



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

# Strengths and Weaknesses of the Highest and Lowest Ranking States

Hawaii's top ranking in 2018 was achieved by landing #1 positions across three well-being elements: including financial, social, and purpose well-being. Alaska, which ranked #3 overall, took the top ranking for the physical element, and Wyoming, which ranked #2 overall, assumed the top ranking for the community element.

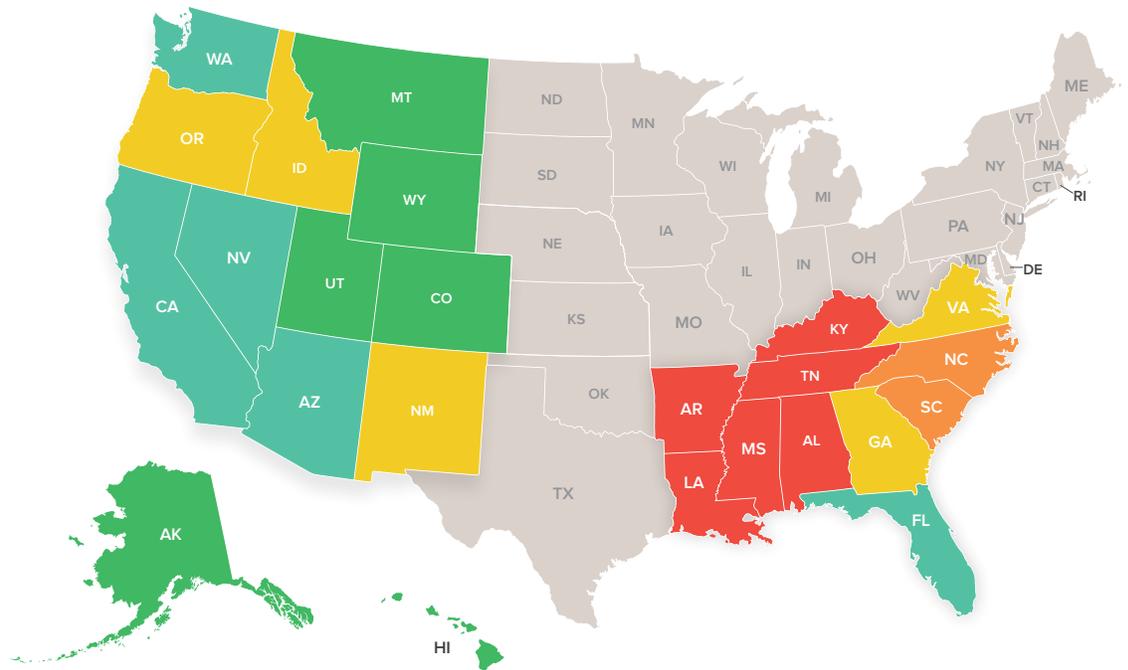
At the bottom, West Virginia assumed the lowest ranking for physical, community, and purpose elements. West Virginia has ranked #50 in physical well-being since 2014, and before 2014, frequented 50th place in the Physical Health Index, which was later replaced by the physical well-being element. Arkansas, which ranked #49 overall, took the bottom position for social and financial elements in 2018, and while Arkansas fell into the bottom five states across four elements in 2017 (financial, social, purpose, and physical), residents from Arkansas did not represent the lowest score across any well-being element in the 2017 rankings.

## States With Highest and Lowest Well-Being Scores in Each Element, 2018

	Top	Bottom	
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Utah</li> <li>• Wyoming</li> <li>• Montana</li> <li>• Alaska</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New York</li> <li>• Kentucky</li> <li>• Oregon</li> <li>• Arkansas</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> </ul>	
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Delaware</li> <li>• Vermont</li> <li>• Utah</li> <li>• Florida</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kansas</li> <li>• Kentucky</li> <li>• Mississippi</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> <li>• Arkansas</li> </ul>	
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Alaska</li> <li>• North Dakota</li> <li>• Delaware</li> <li>• New Hampshire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oklahoma</li> <li>• Louisiana</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> <li>• Mississippi</li> <li>• Arkansas</li> </ul>	
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wyoming</li> <li>• Montana</li> <li>• Idaho</li> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Vermont</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illinois</li> <li>• Maryland</li> <li>• Louisiana</li> <li>• New Mexico</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> </ul>	
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska</li> <li>• Colorado</li> <li>• Wyoming</li> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Connecticut</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arkansas</li> <li>• Mississippi</li> <li>• Alabama</li> <li>• Kentucky</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> </ul>	

## State Trends & Themes in 2018

Once again, in 2018, the Western region of the United States dominated well-being. Almost 50% of the 13 states – including the Rockies and the region to its west – landed in the top 10 for overall well-being, and over 75% fell in the top 20. Common characteristics across these states included high levels of physical well-being, with only Idaho and Nevada falling below the 2nd quintile; high levels of financial well-being, with only Idaho, Oregon, and New Mexico falling below the 2nd quintile; and high levels of purpose well-being, with an average rank of 14 and only Oregon ranking below the 2nd quintile.



*Well-Being for “Western” States includes Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, California, Arizona, and New Mexico.*

*Well-Being for “Southern” States includes Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.*

Consistent with prior years, in 2018, Southern states represented the lowest levels of well-being nationally, representing six of the bottom 10 spots, and only one state, Florida, making it in the top 20. Within the 11 states making up the Southern region, there was only one top 10 ranking across each of the five well-being elements, with Florida taking the #5 spot for social well-being.

Rankings of the Midwest and Eastern regions were varied across the elements, however, 65% of these states ranked in one of the middle quintiles. In addition, Rhode Island, Iowa, and Texas took the middle three positions, ranking 24th, 25th, and 26th, respectively. The bottom state in this group was West Virginia, which ranked last in overall well-being. The top state in this group was Vermont, which ranked 7th in overall well-being, falling from 2nd in the 2017 rankings.

In 2018, we noted two key paradigms. First, we widened the gap between the well-being elite states and the well-being challenged states, but overall, we are still seeing a decline in national well-being – a continuation of broad declines reported in our 2017 rankings. Second, we saw the reinforcement of regional well-being precedents trends: Western states continue to represent the highest measures of well-being, and the South continues to represent the lowest levels of well-being nationally.

In noting these trends and the growing divides in well-being between populations, Sharecare has recognized a need to expand our well-being framework in order to achieve a higher ledge of measurement and context, which will require looking at individualized and self-reported well-being data in addition to the societal and environmental factors that impact one's ability to achieve optimal overall health.

Accordingly, in future years, Sharecare will continue our journey in measuring well-being, while also embarking on a next generation of measurement by adding critical contextual factors to well-being through social determinants of health, encapsulating health risk and impact associated with the environments and circumstances for which we live, work, and play.

Social causes can be linked to death as readily as can pathophysiological and behavioral causes. For example, the number of deaths the researchers calculated as attributable to low education (245,000) is comparable to the number caused by heart attacks (192,898), which was the leading cause of U.S. deaths in 2000. The number of deaths attributable to racial segregation (176,000) is comparable to the number from cerebrovascular disease (167,661), the third leading cause of death in 2000, and the number attributable to low social support (162,000) compares to deaths from lung cancer (155,521).

These findings argue for a broader public health conceptualization of the causes of mortality and an expansive policy approach that considers how social factors can be addressed to improve the health of populations.

This is why Sharecare and Boston University are focused on the next generation of well-being measurement including the critical social determinant factors that define our lives – and death – as much as our genetics and behaviors.

– **Dr. Sandro Galea**

Dean, Boston University  
School of Public Health

# Best Practices for Well-Being Improvement

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Below are best practices for employers, state and community leaders, health systems, hospitals and all population health stakeholders as they implement well-being improvement programs. Best-in-class programs include interventions, infrastructure investments that encourage healthier choices, cultural changes that promote and celebrate well-being, and measurement to gauge progress.

**Engage Individuals and Promote Sustained Lifestyle Changes**—Strategies to improve well-being across populations start with the individual. A holistic, ultra-personalized approach that goes beyond physical health to encompass purpose, social, financial and community factors helps identify and mitigate the underlying root causes of poor health. By delivering a dynamic user experience that includes high-touch (live coaching) and high-tech (self-directed digital coaching) elements, and serves appropriate content (from disease management through lifestyle management), individuals can better manage their health. This dynamic approach moves healthcare from episodic to everyday, helping educate and activate people to live their healthiest lives.

**Foster a Culture of Well-Being**—Creating a workforce strengthened by well-being begins with leadership engagement, employee well-being measurement, and an internal analysis of current well-being initiatives, barriers and needs. The process incorporates all functional tenets of the organization: leadership, values and rituals, human capital, structure, and performance. Organizations need to think about work experience from the employee point of view and consider how policies, structures and workplace culture affect employee well-being. According to a 2018 study by the U.S. Department of Labor, employees typically spend 7.9 hours of their day in a workplace setting or at a worksite. Often, these individuals have limited opportunities to engage in healthy activities and behaviors. Companies that cultivate a culture of well-being ultimately gain a competitive advantage through better employee performance, lower turnover, reduced absenteeism, and a higher sense of individual and shared purpose.

**Create an Active Living Environment; Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice**—Communities that invest in active living, including bike paths, parks, walkability and public transit, have residents with better health and well-being outcomes. Research shows that residents in high active living communities have significantly lower rates of smoking, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and depression; and significantly higher rates of exercise, healthy eating, fresh produce consumption and physical thriving. Cooperation from local schools, worksites, restaurants, grocery stores, faith-based organizations, and city government helps ensure that environmental changes have lasting, community-wide impact, improving residents' health and well-being.

For the last decade, Sharecare has been improving the well-being of entire communities sustainably through its Blue Zones Project solution. Now impacting more than 3.5 million people across North America, Sharecare's 51 Blue Zones Project communities are working together to make the healthy choice the easy choice by optimizing the life radius – the environments where people live, work and play. Based on lessons from the world's longest-lived populations and cultures, the Blue Zones Project takes a systems approach to implement evidence-based policies and programs that will move a community toward optimal health and well-being. Informed by community input and driven by a representative local steering committee, a community blueprint aimed at neighborhood-level strategies to address the social determinants of health and achieve health equity for all is developed.

**Measure, Benchmark, and Identify Opportunities**—Measurement is the foundation of any well-being program. Leaders benchmark their populations, understand gaps and opportunities, and prioritize interventions. In short, measurement informs the overall strategy and quantifies the efficacy of well-being programs and their return on investment.

# 2018 State Well-Being Rankings

2018 Rank		Well-Being Index Score	Purpose Rank	Social Rank	Financial Rank	Community Rank	Physical Rank
1.	Hawaii	64.6	1	1	1	4	4
2.	Wyoming	64.2	3	18	6	1	3
3.	Alaska	63.9	5	8	2	23	1
4.	Montana	63.5	4	19	17	2	7
5.	Utah	63.4	2	4	13	9	14
6.	Colorado	63.4	11	6	10	11	2
7.	Vermont	63.3	14	3	9	5	6
8.	Delaware	62.9	26	2	4	22	10
9.	South Dakota	62.7	6	21	12	6	27
10.	North Dakota	62.7	7	31	3	7	33
11.	New Hampshire	62.7	45	13	5	13	8
12.	Minnesota	62.5	12	32	8	8	20
13.	Washington	62.5	24	20	7	24	11
14.	California	62.2	22	10	27	39	9
15.	Arizona	62.1	8	11	26	15	17
16.	Connecticut	62.1	38	16	21	41	5
17.	Massachusetts	62.0	35	7	19	18	13
18.	Nebraska	61.9	10	30	20	16	26
19.	Nevada	61.9	16	17	11	37	31
20.	Florida	61.8	13	5	36	21	16
21.	Maine	61.7	21	23	22	12	25
22.	Idaho	61.7	23	38	33	3	32
23.	Georgia	61.7	17	15	40	28	21
24.	Wisconsin	61.5	39	40	14	14	28
25.	Rhode Island	61.5	40	44	16	42	12
26.	Iowa	61.5	25	39	15	10	36
27.	Virginia	61.5	30	28	23	29	23
28.	Oregon	61.4	48	25	32	19	15
29.	Texas	61.3	15	22	43	26	34
30.	New Mexico	61.3	9	24	38	49	18

2018 Rank		Well-Being Index Score	Purpose Rank	Social Rank	Financial Rank	Community Rank	Physical Rank
31.	New Jersey	61.2	41	9	28	40	19
32.	Maryland	61.2	32	14	18	47	24
33.	Michigan	61.1	34	33	25	31	30
34.	Pennsylvania	60.9	42	26	24	34	35
35.	Kansas	60.9	28	46	29	27	37
36.	North Carolina	60.8	33	27	39	20	38
37.	New York	60.8	46	29	41	43	22
38.	Ohio	60.6	36	36	31	36	39
39.	South Carolina	60.6	19	34	37	25	41
40.	Missouri	60.6	29	35	34	35	40
41.	Indiana	60.3	31	41	30	33	44
42.	Illinois	60.3	43	43	35	46	29
43.	Louisiana	60.0	20	12	47	48	42
44.	Alabama	59.9	18	37	45	17	48
45.	Oklahoma	59.8	37	42	46	44	43
46.	Tennessee	59.5	44	45	44	30	45
47.	Mississippi	58.9	27	48	49	45	47
48.	Kentucky	58.8	47	47	42	32	49
49.	Arkansas	58.7	49	50	50	38	46
50.	West Virginia	57.0	50	49	48	50	50

- Highest Quintile (1 - 10)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quintile (11 - 20)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quintile (21 - 30)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quintile (31 - 40)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Quintile (41 - 50)

Purpose: Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals  
 Social: Having supportive relationships and love in your life  
 Financial: Managing your economic life to increase security and reduce stress  
 Community: Liking where you live, feeling safe, and having pride in your community  
 Physical: Having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

Some states may have identical Well-being Index scores due to rounding.

Beginning in January 2018, Gallup, in partnership with Sharecare, surveyed U.S. adults aged 18 and older living in all 50 states and the District of Columbia using a dual mail and web-based methodology. The sample was gathered using an address-based sampling (ABS) frame, which was a representative list of all U.S. households. In the survey invitation, sample members were provided with a mail survey and a link and a unique access code if they would prefer to complete the survey online. Samples for this study were purchased from Survey Sampling International. Respondents were chosen at random within each household based on which member had the next birthday. Spanish-language surveys and related materials were also provided for households that had a high likelihood of including a Spanish language speaker, based on U.S. Census records.

Approximately 10,000 U.S. adults aged 18 and older were surveyed each month. More than 2.6 million surveys were conducted after it began in 2008.

### **About the Sharecare Well-Being Index**

The [Sharecare Well-Being Index](#) is calculated on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 represents the lowest possible well-being and 100 represents the highest possible well-being. The Well-Being Index score for the U.S. and for each community is made up of metrics within each of the five essential elements of well-being:

- Purpose: liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- Social: having supportive relationships and love in your life
- Financial: managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- Community: liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community
- Physical: having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

Through ongoing nationally representative surveys, the Well-Being Index creates a composite picture of health and well-being within the U.S. To learn more, visit <https://wellbeingindex.sharecare.com>.