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## Economic Prosperity of Nevada Counties and Southwest Metros

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**ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF  
NEVADA COUNTIES AND SOUTHWEST METROS**

**Economic Development & Workforce Fact Sheet No. 8 | December 2019**

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**PURPOSE:**

This Fact Sheet highlights the economic and social disparities of Nevada's counties as well as the counties in the Southwest Metro Area. By using data from The Hamilton Project,<sup>1</sup> the following tables illustrate disparities within each county in Nevada and in the Southwest Metros.

**WHAT IS THE VITALITY INDEX?**

The Vitality Index takes multiple factors into account when considering the viability of a county's economy. Rather than isolating economic and social measures, these factors are combined to create an overall score. Individual scores can be compared to the standard of the United States as a whole. The national Vitality Index is set at zero, so any deviation higher or lower than zero means that particular county or state is above or below the national average.

**WHAT INFLUENCES A VITALITY INDEX?**

Factors such as a county's education level, population, and innovation capacity tend to predict a higher Vitality Index. Conversely, counties with highly concentrated industries, decreased levels of migration, and fewer public goods score lower on the Vitality Index. Even minor fluctuations can speak to much larger issues. While a six year difference in life expectancy between counties may seem nominal, this measure can equate to about 40 years of lost progress compared to the national average. Further, counties that have a higher Vitality Index tend to have higher life expectancies for their populations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "An interactive exploration of the geography of prosperity" Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/02/28/an-interactive-exploration-of-the-geography-of-prosperity/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

**TABLE 1: VITALITY INDEX OF NEVADA COUNTIES**

County	Vitality Index <sup>3</sup>	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate (Ages 24-54)	Housing Vacancy Rate	Life Expectancy
Carson City	-0.4868	\$49,300	14.70%	7.70%	75.50%	6.60%	76.8
Churchill	-0.6877	\$46,900	13.80%	7.80%	67.60%	10.40%	76.6
Clark	-0.2852	\$54,900	14.60%	8.30%	75.40%	14.60%	78.3
Douglas	0.3578	\$61,200	9.80%	6.20%	76.90%	15.30%	81.1
Elko	0.6124	\$76,200	11.50%	4.40%	79.00%	15.20%	78.3
Esmeralda	-0.8318	\$39,400	6.80%	3.90%	72.50%	50.20%	75.5
Eureka	0.3256	\$67,200	10.00%	-	81.20%	34.4%	77.5
Humboldt	0.3235	\$69,300	9.10%	7.30%	79.30%	16.00%	76.4
Lander	0.4743	\$79,900	13.20%	7.60%	80.80%	18.80%	76.6
Lincoln	-0.7327	\$53,000	12.10%	9.30%	58.00%	27.50%	76.7
Lyon	-0.5801	\$50,900	13.70%	9.80%	69.80%	12.40%	76.6
Mineral	-1.8986	\$39,400	20.30%	20.60%	58.90%	32.90%	74.3
Nye	-1.3088	\$44,200	17.30%	11.40%	61.90%	19.10%	74.1
Pershing	-0.7857	\$52,300	15.00%	4.20%	46.30%	18.30%	78.4
Storey	0.6428	\$63,600	7.70%	4.20%	77.70%	15.40%	82.1
Washoe	0.0015	\$58,600	13.30%	6.80%	79.30%	9.20%	78.1
White Pine	-0.5444	\$60,400	13.00%	6.20%	53.90%	25.90%	76.7
<b>Nevada</b>	<b>-0.2407</b>	<b>\$55,400</b>	<b>11.50%</b>	<b>4.40%</b>	<b>79.00%</b>	<b>15.20%</b>	<b>78.3</b>
<b>National Level</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$57,700</b>	<b>14.60%</b>	<b>6.60%</b>	<b>76.60%</b>	<b>12.20%</b>	<b>79.4</b>

\*No data was available for Eureka County's unemployment rate.

<sup>3</sup> In the vitality index column, each number showing a negative number indicates that the county falls below the national average.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM TABLE 1:**

1. Nevada’s Vitality Index is below the national level in 10 of 17 counties
2. The housing vacancy rates in Carson City and White Pine are significantly lower than other counties in Nevada.
3. Mineral County has the lowest rankings in 5 of 7 categories.
4. In the aggregate, Nevada as a state, is performing lower than the national average in 4 of the 6 criteria for the measurement of the overall vitality index.

**TABLE 2: VITALITY INDEX FOR SOUTHWEST METRO COUNTIES  
WITH POPULATION OVER 2 MILLION**

<b>County<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Vitality Index</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>Poverty Rate</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>Employment Rate (Ages 24-54)</b>	<b>Housing Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>Life Expectancy</b>
Denver	0.2099	\$60,100	15.10%	4.50%	82.30%	6.30%	80.0
Clark	-0.2852	\$54,900	14.60%	8.30%	75.40%	14.60%	78.3
Los Angeles	0.0903	\$61,000	17.00%	7.80%	76.10%	6.00%	81.4
Maricopa	-0.0207	\$58,600	15.70%	6.00%	76.80%	12.40%	80.1
Salt Lake	0.5865	\$67,900	10.40%	4.30%	80.60%	5.50%	79.4
<b>National Level</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$57,700</b>	<b>14.60%</b>	<b>6.60%</b>	<b>76.60%</b>	<b>12.20%</b>	<b>79.4</b>

**KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM TABLE 2:**

1. Clark County has the lowest rankings in 6 of 7 categories.
2. Denver has the highest employment rate of the Southwest Metros
3. Salt Lake County ranks the highest in 5 of 7 categories.

<sup>4</sup> Denver county is provided as a proxy for Denver MSA; Clark County is provided as a proxy for Las Vegas-Paradise-Henderson, MSA; Maricopa county is provided as a proxy for Phoenix MSA; Salt Lake is provided as a proxy for Salt Lake MSA