



Methodology for calculation of Rankings for the American County Review:

Individual scores are calculated for each of the following fifty-four (54) data inputs below. Individual scores determine the ranking for each city/town, county, and school district, both statewide, and nationally, for each data input. Each individual score is then combined to create one final value (total score) per city/town, county, and school district - which is then utilized to determine the final ranking for each these respective entities.

Scores are calculated by summing the total from all cities/towns, counties, and school districts for the variable in question and then determining the individual city/town, county, or school districts weight, or contribution to the total. By determining the relative value for each variable (i.e. score), the American County Review (ACRe) is able to determine the correct final ranking for each city/town, county, and school district, while not simply depending on the underlying ranking.

Frequency of updates for ranking data:

American County Review rankings are updated no later than thirty days following standard fiscal quarter dates to reflect the new releases of any Census data and data utilized from quasi government sources.

Current rankings are provided utilizing data up to and including September 30, 2018

Rankings will next be released by January 30, 2019 utilizing all data inputs up to, and effective, December 31, 2018

Demographics (10)

- Population - (change from 2015 to 2017)
- Population - (average annual change 2010 - 2017)
- Median Income - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Median Income - (average annual change 2010 - 2016)
- Unemployment rate (2016)
- Unemployment rate - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Unemployment rate - (average annual change 2010 - 2016)
- Poverty rate (2016)
- Poverty rate - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Poverty rate - (average annual change 2010 - 2016)

Financial (2)

- County Debt per Resident - (2012)
- County School District Debt per Student - (2016) – school districts are aggregated within each county

Industry (2)

- Industry Concentration Risk - (2016)
- Firm Concentration Risk - (2016)

Environment (9)

- Air - Climate Change exposure in regards to Ragweed, and Ozone (Q3 2017)
- Water - Climate Change exposure as projected by 2050

- Coastal - Climate Change exposure in regards to rising Sea levels
- Declarations of Disaster – (review from 2009 to Q2 2018)
- Drought Conditions (Q2 2018)
- Superfund sites (September 2017)
- Fracking Wells (Q4 2017)
- Flood Risk (2017)
- Water Usage 2015 – released 06/2018
- Coal Ash Ponds / Landfills

Health (6)

- Counties identified by Center for Disease Control (CDC) at risk (Q4 2017)
- Safe Drinking Water Violations (review 2009 to Q2 2018)
- Percentage of Population diagnosed with Diabetes (CDC) 2016
- Drug Overdose Mortality Rates (December 2016)
- Opioid Prescription Rates (December 2016)
- Lyme Disease (Q4 2017)

Home Ownership (6)

- Home Ownership as a percentage (2016)
- Home Ownership as a percentage - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Home Ownership as a percentage - (average annual change 2010 - 2016)
- Vacant Housing as a percentage (2016)
- Vacant Housing as a percentage - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Vacant Housing as a percentage - (average annual change 2010 - 2016)

Housing Values (3)

- Median Housing Values – (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Median Housing Values – (average annual change 2009 - 2016)
- Median Income as a percentage of Median Housing Values (2016)

Real Estate Taxes (6)

- Real Estate Taxes as a percentage of Median Housing Values (2016)
- Real Estate Taxes as a percentage of Median Housing Values - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Real Estate Taxes as a percentage of Median Housing Values - (average annual change 2010 – 2016)
- Real Estate Taxes as a percentage Median Income (2016)
- Real Estate Taxes as a percentage Median Income - (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Real Estate Taxes as a percentage Median Income - (average annual change 2010 – 2016)

Personal Infrastructure (5)

- Police per capita (2016)
- Firefighters per capita (2016)
- Teachers per student capita (2016)
- Dentists per capita (2016)
- Doctors per capita (2015)

Social Indicators (5)

- Bachelor's Degree or higher - percentage of population (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Bachelor's Degree or higher - percentage of population (Average change 2010 - 2016)
- Incidents of Crime per 100,000 residents (2016)
- Incidents of Crime per 100,000 residents – (change from 2015 to 2016)
- Incidents of Crime per 100,000 residents - (average annual change 2009 - 2016)

Sources of data utilized by the American County Review include:

U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5 Year), as (12/08/2017)

<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html>

U.S. Census Bureau (Census of Governments – County Area Employment and Payroll Data)

<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

U.S. Census Bureau (County Business Patterns), as (04/21/2017)

<http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/advpress.nsf/names/hq_2011-5-16_sdwaecho

FBI, Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>

Kentucky State Police <http://www.kentuckystatepolice.org/data.htm>

New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/>

West Virginia State Police <http://www.wvsp.gov/about/Pages/Publications.aspx>

HRSA Health Resources and Services Administration – Area Health Resource File <http://ahrf.hrsa.gov/>

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency – as (12/31/2016) <http://www.fema.gov/states/new-york>

GlobalChange.gov <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/>

Climate Central <http://www.climatecentral.org/>

National Resources Defense Council <http://www.nrdc.org/globalWarming/sneezing/contents.asp>

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers http://climatechange.alaska.gov/docs/iaw_USACE_erosion_rpt.pdf

The Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets (CReSIS) <https://www.cresis.ku.edu/data/sea-level-rise-maps>

CDC via Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes <http://journals.lww.com/jaids/pages/issuelist.aspx>

We would like to note that there are hundreds of additional sources that have been utilized to: source data, and or validate data. School boards, sheriff's offices, state crime reports, tax assessors at various locations throughout the United States have been utilized in the creation of the American County Review Rankings. We would like to recognize those who have graciously assisted in the construction of these rankings especially those who have been kind enough to share their own research and results. Thank you again to those at Climate Central, GlobalChange, and the National Resource Defense Council.

Data corrections and / or assumptions - where data could not be verified:**Number of Counties in the United States**

As of December 31, 2017 there are 3,142 counties in the United States of which the American County Review has analyzed and ranked 3,141

Kalawao County, Hawaii (FIPS Code 15005) was excluded from analysis, as this county has an estimated population of 90. It is a judicial district of Maui County. The county has no elected government.

Also please note that the Independent city of Bedford, Virginia (51515) changed to town status and was added to Bedford County (51019) effective July 1, 2013.

Effective 2015: 02270 Wade Hampton Census Area changed its name and FIPS Code to: 02158 Kusilvak Census Area, Alaska

Effective 2015: 46113 Shannon County, South Dakota changed its name and FIPS Code to: 46102 Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota

Demographics**Median Housing Value - U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 5 Year)**

The census data for Median Housing Values for the following counties could not be validated for the period of 2009 – 2013. As a result these counties utilized modified figures that were derived by reviewing the census provided allocation of housing units with ranges of values. This data was reviewed for the previous year and subsequent year providing a growth or contraction factor that was then utilized in determining a better representation of the Median Housing Value for the county in question.

The American County Review will continue to directly contact the respective agencies in an effort to collect missing or incorrect data.

Blaine County	Nebraska
Dimmit County	Texas
Foard County	Texas
Glasscock County	Texas
Irion County	Texas
Jim Hogg County	Texas
Kenedy County	Texas
King County	Texas
La Salle County	Texas
Martin County	Texas
Real County	Texas
Runnels County	Texas
Sabine County	Texas
Throckmorton County	Texas
Upton County	Texas
Ward County	Texas

Environment

Climate Change Data

- Climate Change data for Alaska was determined by utilizing data from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as the Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets (CREGIS). Based upon the multiple physical factors facing Alaska in climate change scenarios: flooding, coastal erosion, tundra / permafrost thawing – a value of 1 (one) was assigned to the scores of those identified counties in Alaska under the data input Coastal - Climate Change exposure in regards to rising Sea levels. Scores for counties identified as exposed to Climate Change range from 0.018 to 6.34

Declarations of Disaster

- Declarations can include declarations for Major Disasters, Emergencies, and Fires. Each type of declaration has its own requirements and types of assistance.
- All declarations from 2009 onward have been checked by hand to prevent duplication in the counting of disasters. This occurs in FEMA reports where the disaster was originally designated an Emergency, or a Fire, and later designated again as a Major Disaster. Therefore, the data utilized by the American County Review may not match other sources that utilize the FEMA data feed.

Superfund sites

- Superfund sites are included from the list of NPL sites provided by the EPA as well as the list of Proposed sites from the EPA.
- Any sites not provided with a score from the EPA are all scored at the minimum scoring level of 28.5 which is set by the EPA for any site to be included on the NPL list or the proposed list.

Coal Ash Ponds / Landfills

- All Coal Ash data (CCR) was checked by hand using original power company documents Ponds and Landfills where previously closed have numbers taken into account where documents could be sourced from the respective power producer.

Social Indicators

Crime Data - FBI, Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

Please Note: Violent Crime, and Property Crime, are combined to provide one Incidents of Crime for each county

Please Also Note: The FBI UCR data reported for Counties (Table 10 on the FBI UCR site), will not match what the American County Review has utilized. This is due to the fact that the American County Review has rebuilt all the FBI UCR data from the raw data files provided by the FBI. This has provided a more accurate representation of Crime levels at the County level as well as increased coverage of all Counties by a factor of 18%

The following counties either did not report data to the FBI UCR or their data could not be validated for the period of 2009 – 2016. As a result these counties utilized the state population weighted crime ratio (per 100,000) for the period in question. The American County Review will continue to directly contact the respective agencies in an effort to collect missing or incorrect data.

Aleutians East Borough	Alaska
Denali Borough	Alaska
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	Alaska
Lake and Peninsula Borough	Alaska
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	Alaska
Northwest Arctic Borough	Alaska
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	Alaska
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	Alaska
Yakutat City and Borough	Alaska
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	Alaska
Conejos County	Colorado
Costilla County	Colorado
Crowley County	Colorado
Kiowa County	Colorado
Mineral County	Colorado
Liberty County	Florida
Chattahoochee County	Georgia
Glascock County	Georgia
Webster County	Georgia
Allamakee County	Iowa
Decatur County	Iowa
Monona County	Iowa
Ringgold County	Iowa
Hamilton County	Kansas
Haskell County	Kansas
Jewell County	Kansas
Wallace County	Kansas
Alcorn County	Mississippi
Benton County	Mississippi
Holmes County	Mississippi
Issaquena County	Mississippi
Jefferson Davis County	Mississippi
Lawrence County	Mississippi

Perry County	Mississippi
Quitman County	Mississippi
Sharkey County	Mississippi
Smith County	Mississippi
Walthall County	Mississippi
Winston County	Mississippi
Yalobusha County	Mississippi
Liberty County	Montana
Petroleum County	Montana
Powder River County	Montana
Treasure County	Montana
Wheatland County	Montana
Arthur County	Nebraska
Banner County	Nebraska
Blaine County	Nebraska
Boone County	Nebraska
Cedar County	Nebraska
Clay County	Nebraska
Dundy County	Nebraska
Fillmore County	Nebraska
Frontier County	Nebraska
Garden County	Nebraska
Garfield County	Nebraska
Grant County	Nebraska
Greeley County	Nebraska
Hayes County	Nebraska
Hooker County	Nebraska
Keya Paha County	Nebraska
Logan County	Nebraska
Loup County	Nebraska
McPherson County	Nebraska
Thomas County	Nebraska
Thurston County	Nebraska
Valley County	Nebraska
Wheeler County	Nebraska
Catron County	New Mexico
De Baca County	New Mexico
Harding County	New Mexico
Caswell County	North Carolina
Gates County	North Carolina
Graham County	North Carolina
Hyde County	North Carolina
Benson County	North Dakota
Billings County	North Dakota
Bowman County	North Dakota

Divide County	North Dakota
Dunn County	North Dakota
Golden Valley County	North Dakota
Griggs County	North Dakota
Sioux County	North Dakota
Steele County	North Dakota
Wheeler County	Oregon
Bon Homme County	South Dakota
Buffalo County	South Dakota
Clark County	South Dakota
Day County	South Dakota
Edmunds County	South Dakota
Grant County	South Dakota
Gregory County	South Dakota
Haakon County	South Dakota
Harding County	South Dakota
Hyde County	South Dakota
Jackson County	South Dakota
Jones County	South Dakota
Kingsbury County	South Dakota
Lyman County	South Dakota
Mellette County	South Dakota
Sully County	South Dakota
Todd County	South Dakota
Collingsworth County	Texas
McMullen County	Texas
Garfield County	Utah
Piute County	Utah
Rappahannock County	Virginia
Pulaski County	Indiana
Union County	Indiana

Disclaimers:

Crime Data and the use of the FBI (UCR) Uniform Crime Reporting data:

Because of concern regarding the proper use of UCR data, the FBI has the following policies:

- *The FBI does not analyze, interpret, or publish crime statistics based solely on a single-dimension interagency ranking.*
- *The FBI does not provide agency-based crime statistics to data users in a ranked format.*
- *When providing/using agency-oriented statistics, the FBI cautions and, in fact, strongly discourages, data users against using rankings to evaluate locales or the effectiveness of their law enforcement agencies.*

For further information regarding the user of the FBI UCR data please go to:

<https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr-statistics-their-proper-use>

Please note: The following states do not have State UCR Programs: Indiana, Mississippi, and New Mexico. Participating agencies in these states submit their data directly to the FBI.

The Ohio State UCR Program collects data only from agencies that report via the National Incident-Based Reporting System. Ohio agencies that use the Summary Reporting System submit UCR data directly to the FBI.

Questions?

Please contact support at support@acredata.com or call us directly at 416-705-9553, or visit our website acredata.com

We can also be reached on Twitter [@acredata](https://twitter.com/acredata)