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CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX

Helping Communities Thrive

University of Missouri Extension

PRESENTERS

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- Angela Johnson, Assistant Director and Research Project Analyst Lead, Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems
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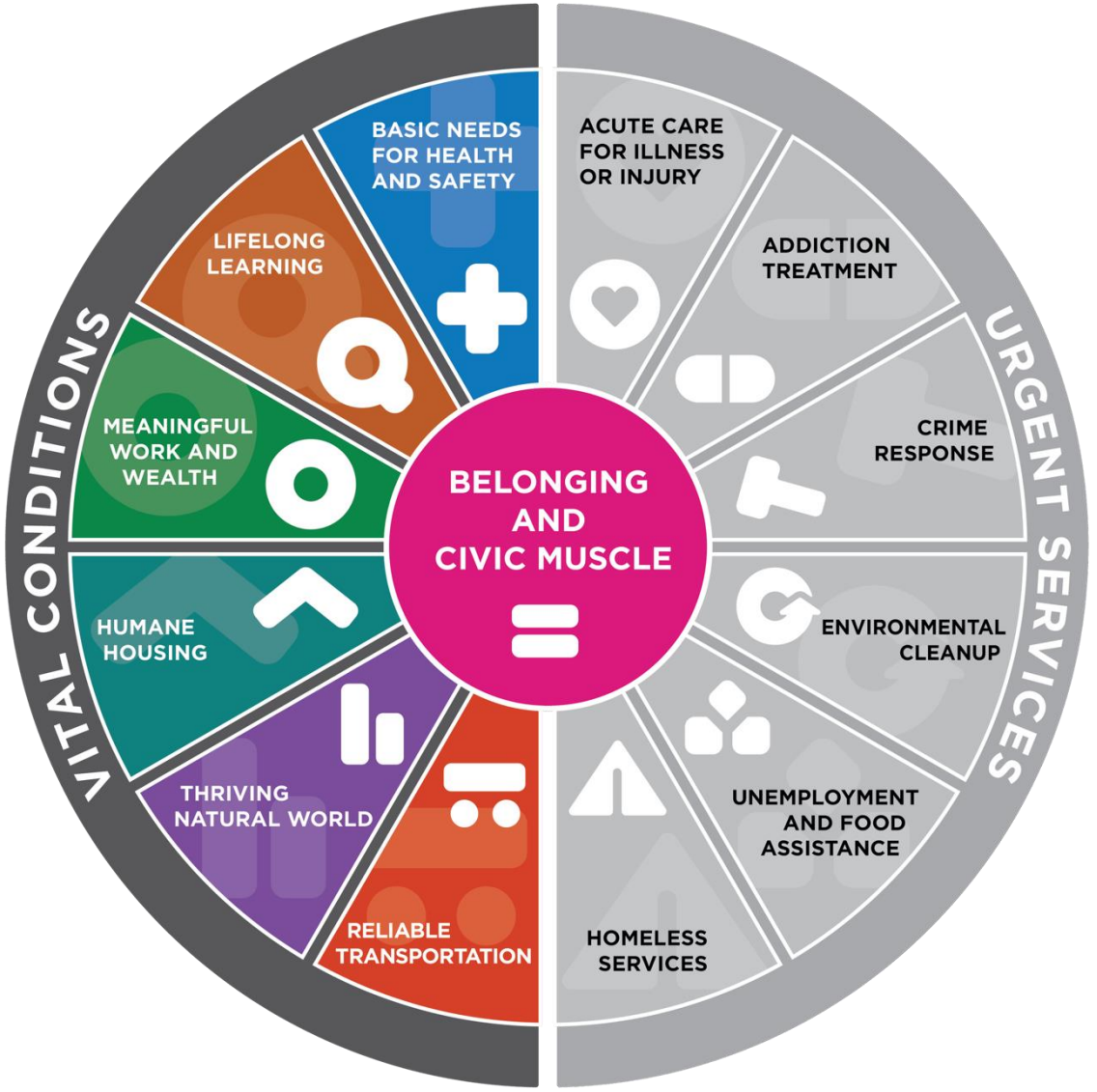
INTRODUCTION + BACKGROUND

- Thriving Together Springboard – all people and places are thriving, no exceptions.



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Building the collective strength of leaders in a place (neighborhood, town, region) to respond to challenges and to proactively pursue thriving communities.

DEFINING CIVIC MUSCLE

DEFINING CIVIC MUSCLE

Belonging

- Place-based communities building social capital through neighboring, creative placemaking, etc.

Contribution

- Residents (particularly those at the margins) participating in civic life and engaged in decision-making (volunteering, attending public meetings, etc.)

Leadership

- Community leaders (including those who have less power and influence) collaborating for action and bridge building.

Vitality

- Residents, organizations, and governments co-creating conditions for thriving, resourceful places.

(BUT IS THIS CIVIC MUSCLE STUFF STILL TOO SQUISHY?)

CIVIC MUSCLE FRAMEWORK

PEER COUNTIES

Peer counties help to set goals, identify successful local strategies, and discover community partners

PEER CHARACTERISTICS

- Total population
- Median household income
- Population age 75+
- Veterans
- Families with children
- Urban/rural populations

CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX

The Civic Muscle Index is a framework for exploring the characteristics that contribute to thriving communities and engaged citizenry.

BELONGING

- Home ownership
- Not living alone
- Engaged youth
- Racial diversity
- Black-White Interaction Index
- Population change (2000-2010 + 2010-2020)

CONTRIBUTION

- Nonprofit organizations
- Social associations
- Voter participation rate (2020 + 2024)
- Census response rate
- Civic participation
- Labor force participation

LEADERSHIP

- Trust in community leaders
- Trust in community members
- Trust in local police

VITALITY

- College-educated population
- High school graduation
- School funding adequacy
- School test scores
- Median household income
- Employment rate + rate change
- Active transportation (commuting)
- Crime-free neighborhoods
- Living in a safe neighborhood
- Occupied housing
- Access to childcare centers
- Access to primary care physicians
- Access to food stores
- Access to high-speed internet
- Access to libraries
- Access to parks
- Business creation

WELL-BEING

- Mental health
- Physical health
- General health
- Life expectancy

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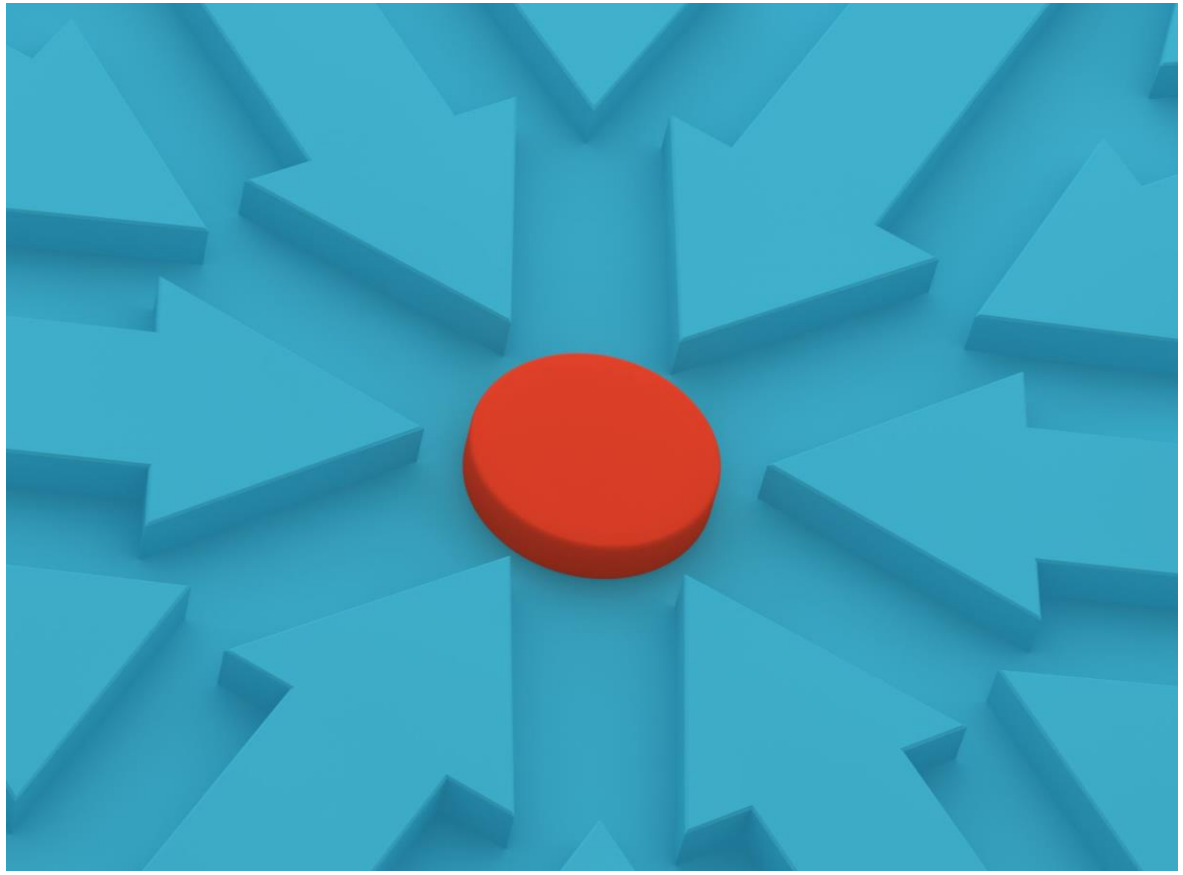
CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX + METHODOLOGY



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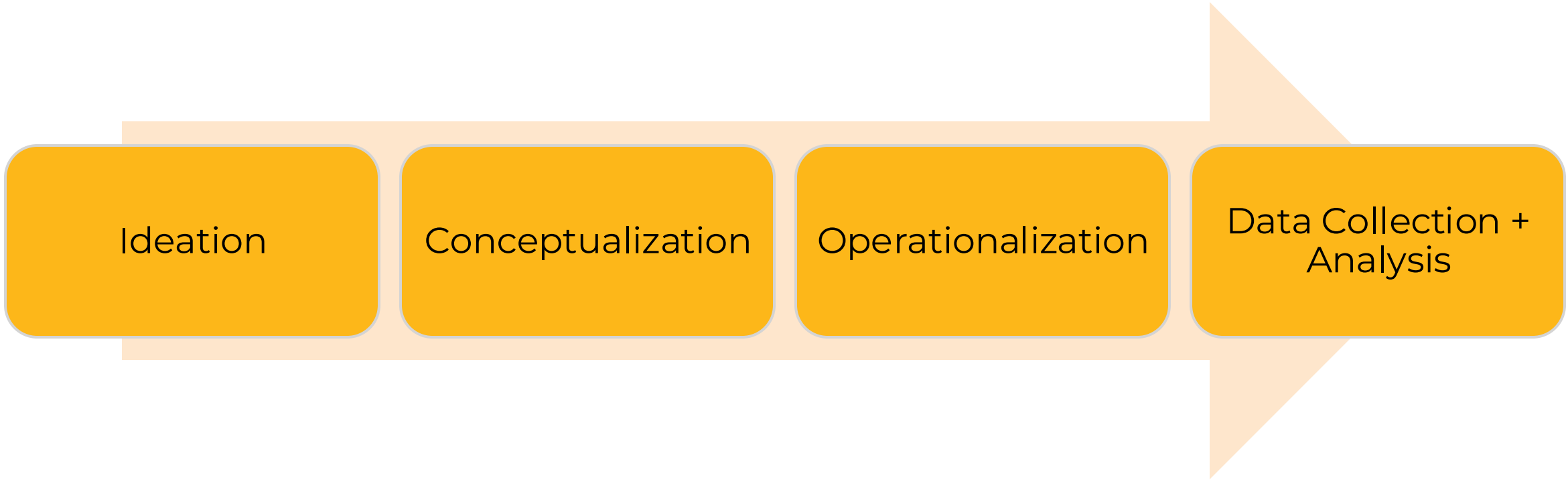
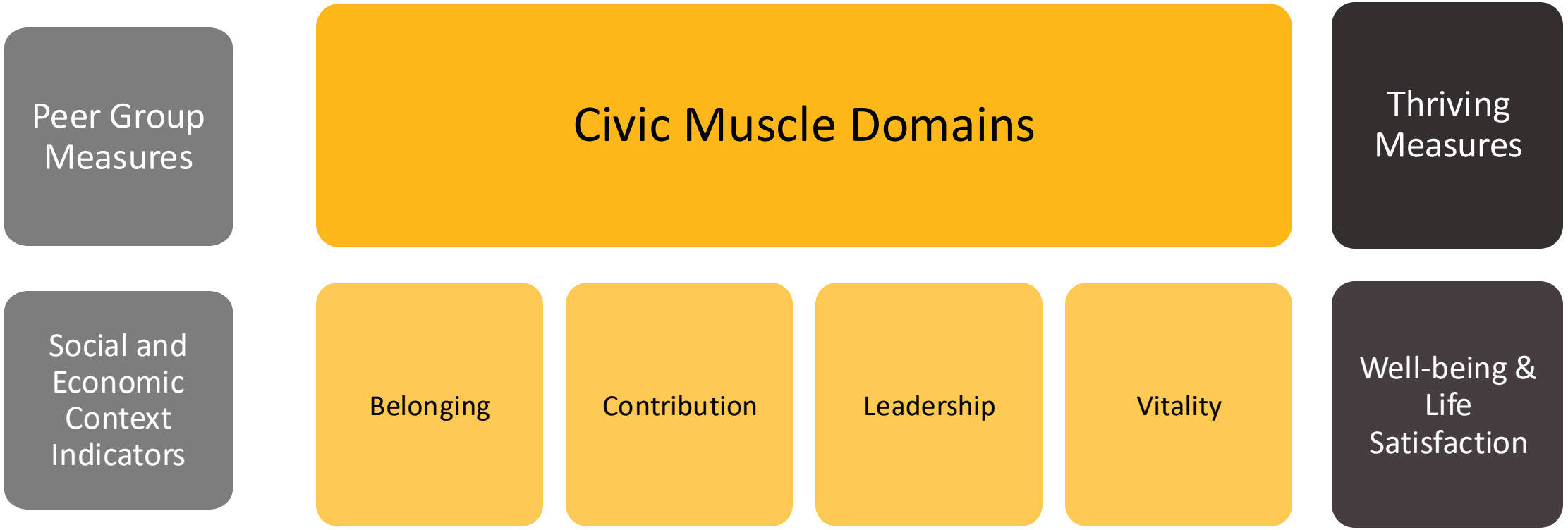
CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX

A Blueprint for Data Analysis



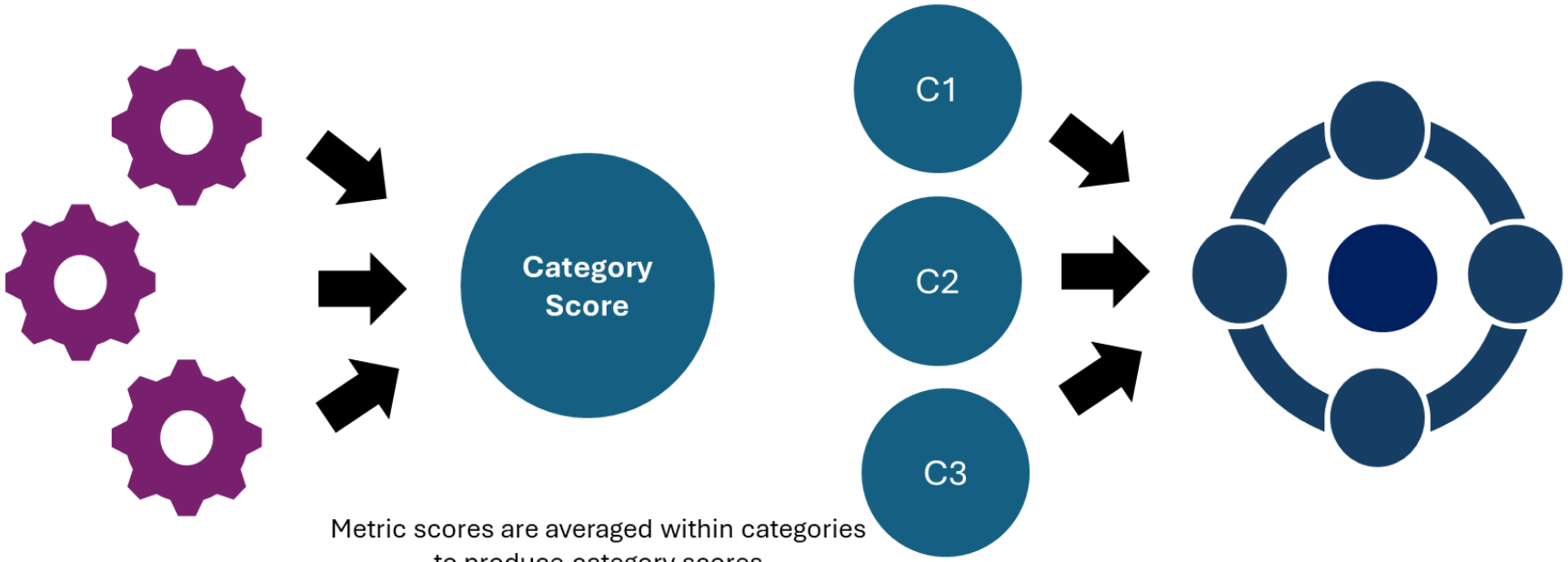
CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX DOMAINS



CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX METHODOLOGY

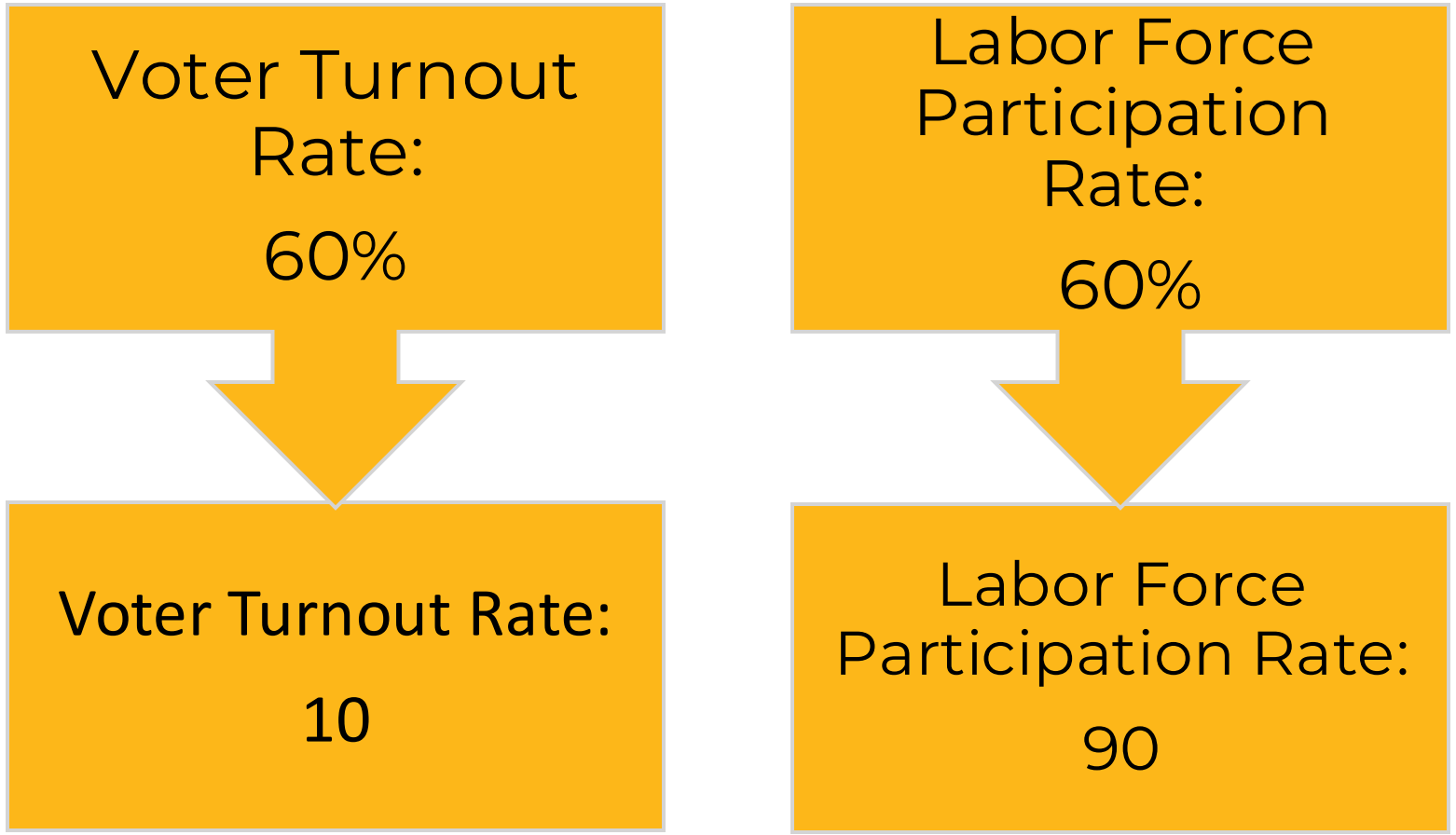
Data are gathered and scores are generated for each county-level metric on a 0-100 scale

Category scores are weighted and averaged to produce the final Civic Muscle Index score



Metric scores are averaged within categories to produce category scores

CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX SCORING



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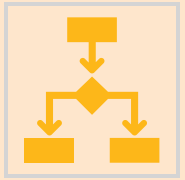
CIVIC MUSCLE INDEX RANKING



Hierarchical Model

Uses framework categories and subcategories

Aggregate subcomponents before final aggregation.

Weighting Considerations

Some metrics weighted (when conceptually similar)

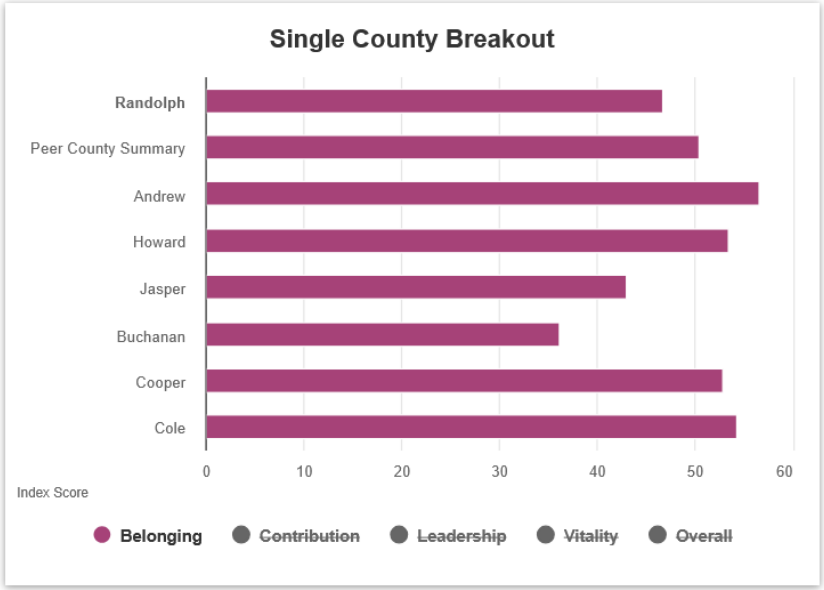
Missing Data Handling

Impute missing data from peers, if available

Exclude from rankings when # of missing metrics exceeds threshold

PEER COUNTY COMPARISON

- **Peer Groups Analysis**
  - Allows for meaningful comparison of counties based on shared characteristics
- **Mahalanobis Distance**
  - Analytical method selected to generate peers
- **Independent from Civic Muscle**
  - Defined using demographic and economic factors
- **Top 6 Peers** Identified
  - Unique set for each county



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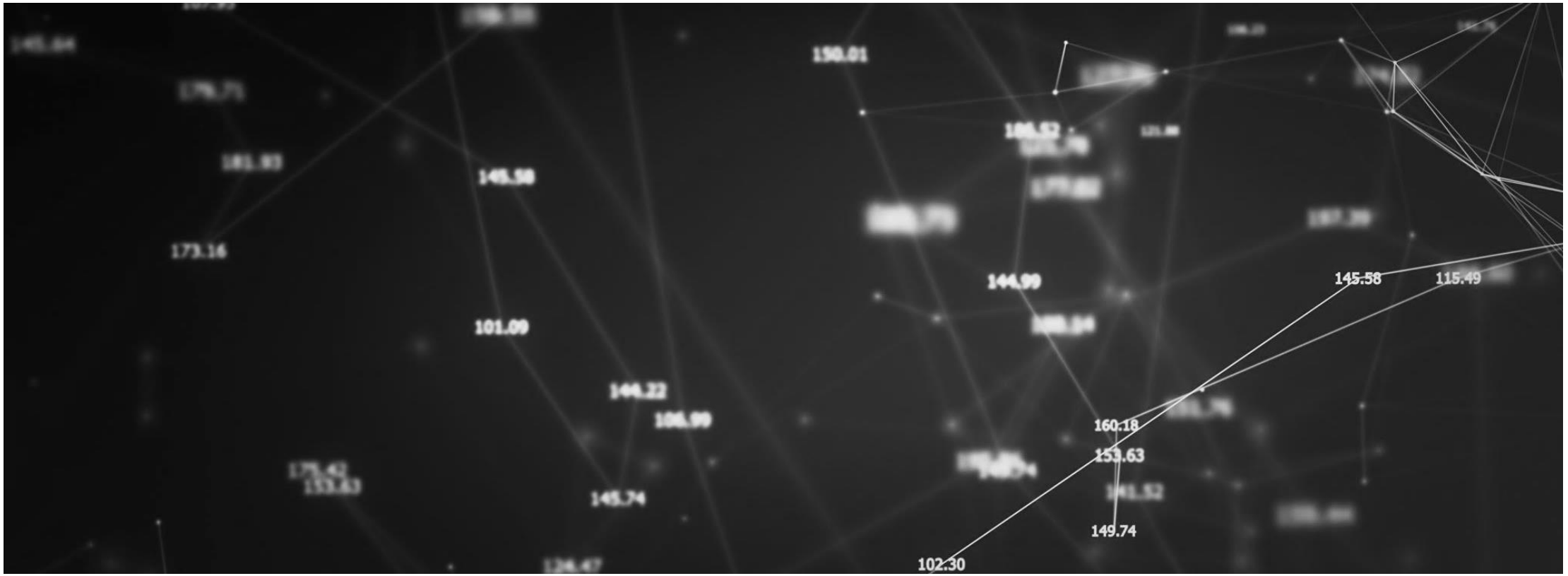
TOOL + INTERFACE DEVELOPMENT



TOOL + INTERFACE REQUIREMENTS

- Displays overall and sub-category ranking/score/strata
- Displays peer-county comparison
- Includes maps, charts, and tables
- Provides call to action
- Provides access to purpose and methodology

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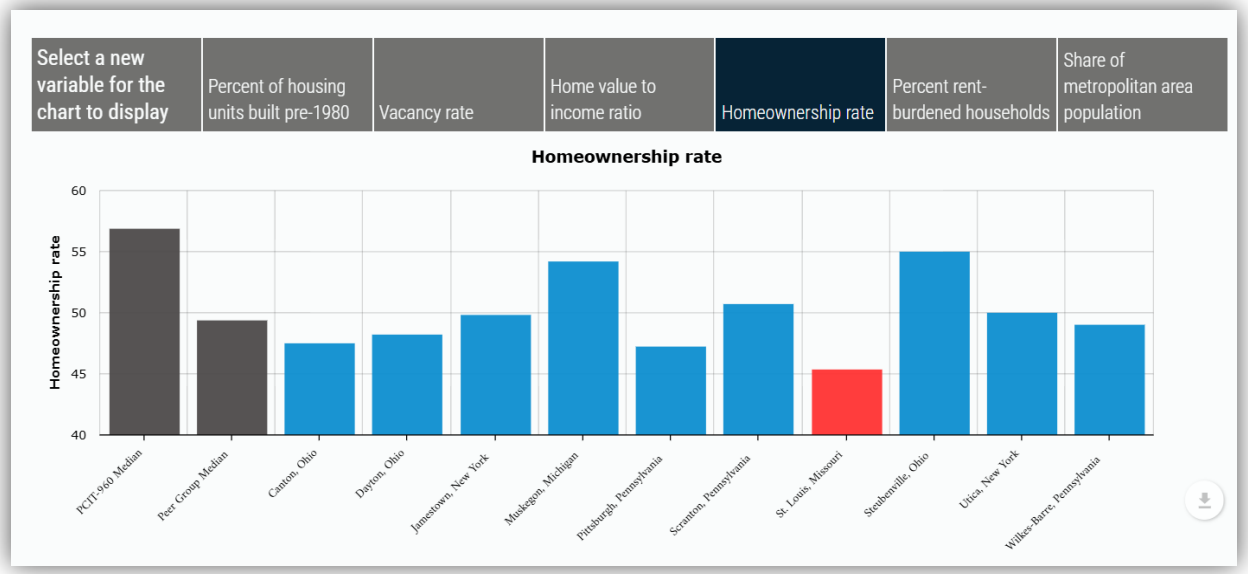
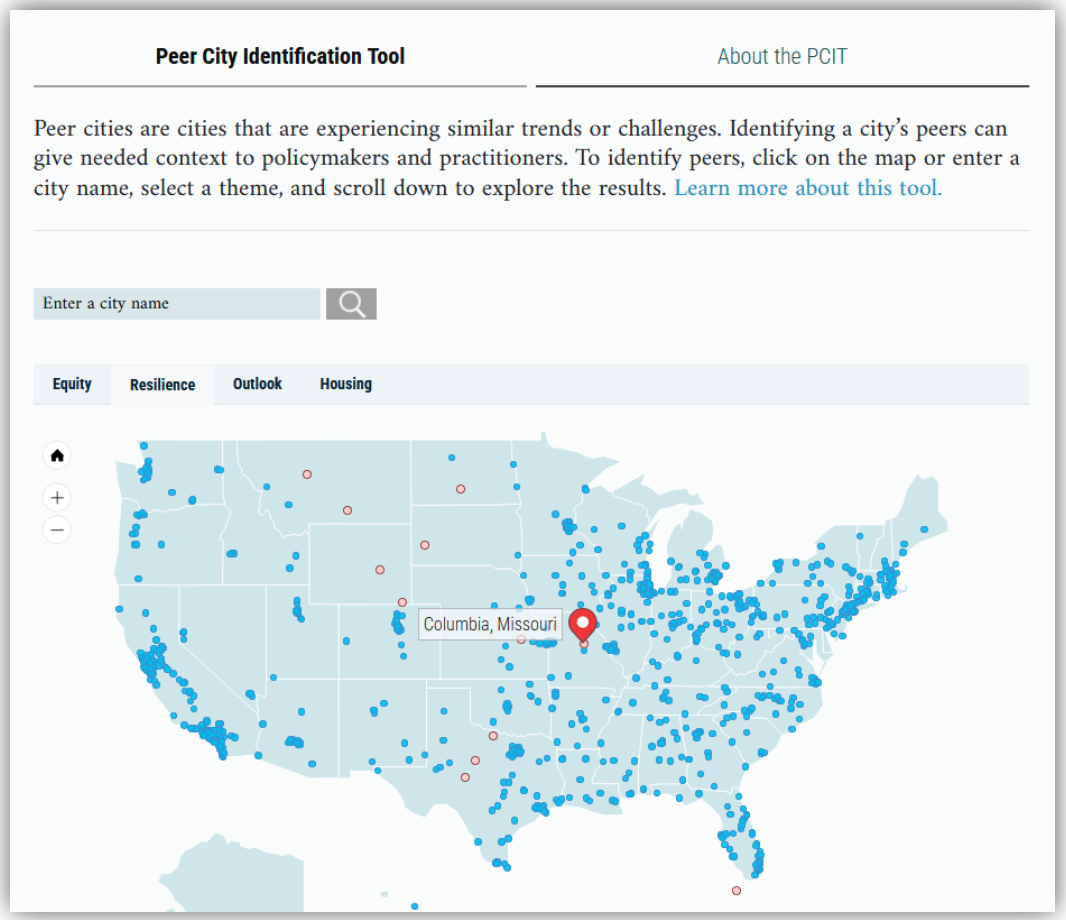
INTERFACE DESIGNS WE LIKE

- Peer City Identification Tool
- Explore MO Health
- County Health Rankings





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THE FINAL PRODUCT

Civic Muscle Index Website

https://civicmuscleindex.org

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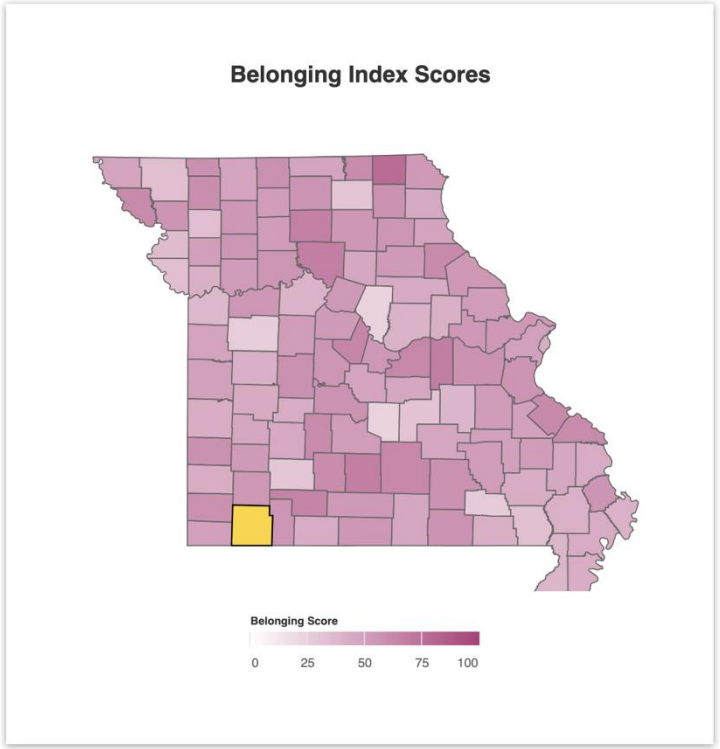
BELONGING

Select County: Barry County, MO



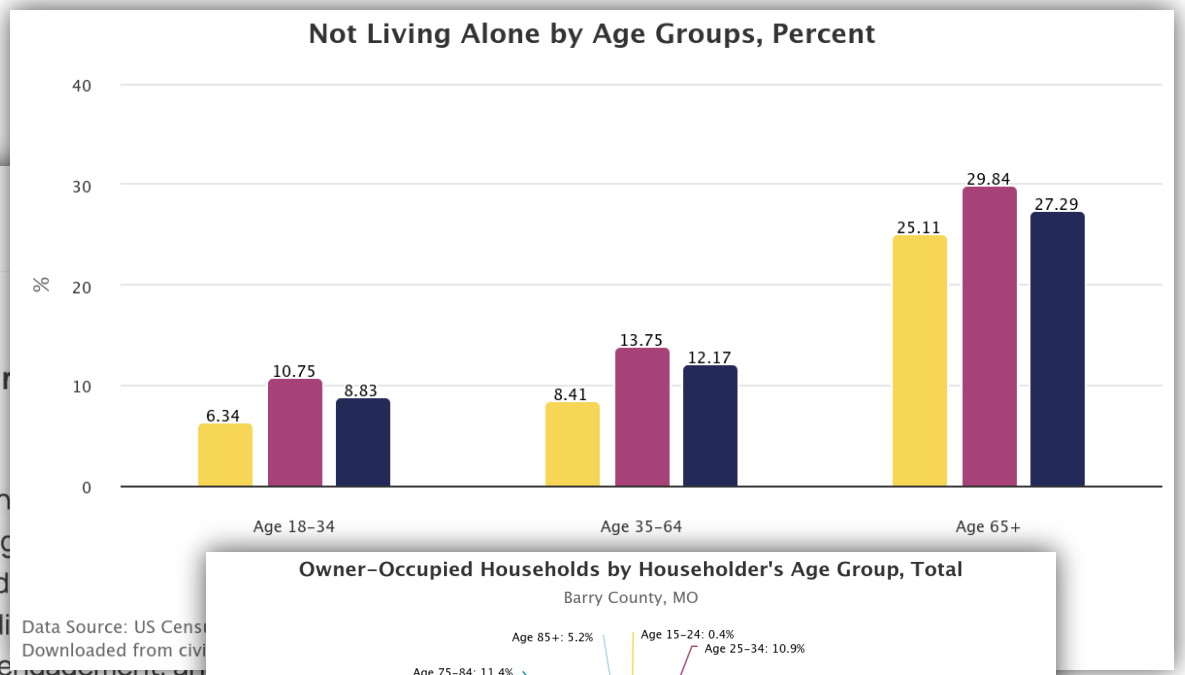
How Strong is Belongi
Community?

Belonging scores are high
have youth who are engag
stable, and neighborhood
Low belonging scores indi
housing, low community e
higher rates of loneliness.

Barry County, MO

59.5

Belonging Score



Data Source: US Censu
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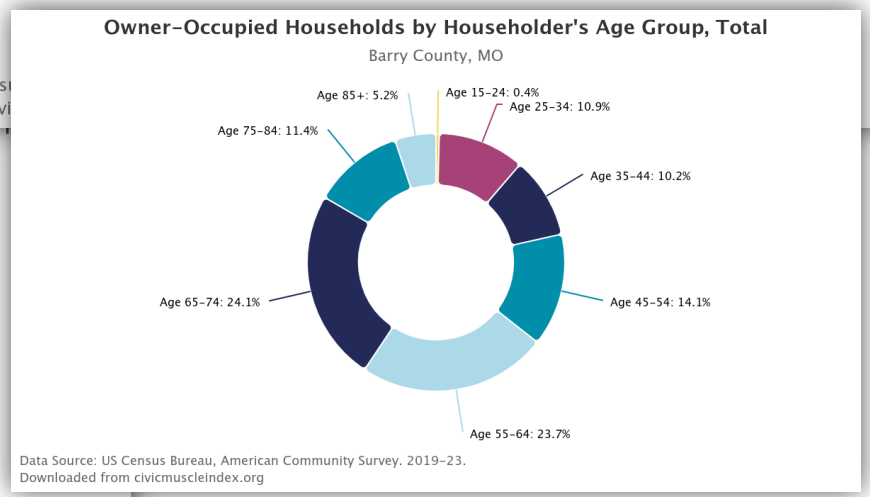

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2019-23.
Downloaded from civicmuscleindex.org

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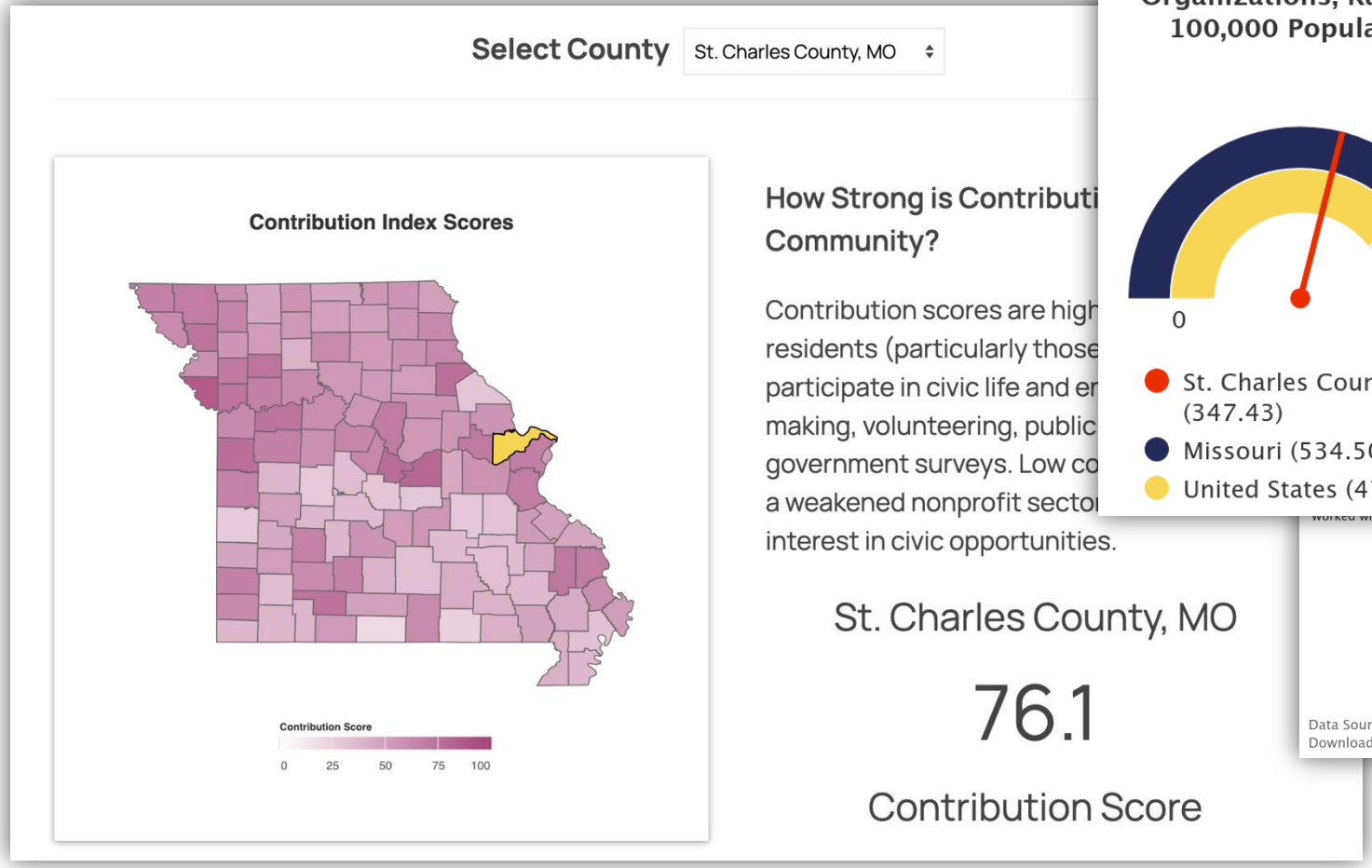
CONTRIBUTION



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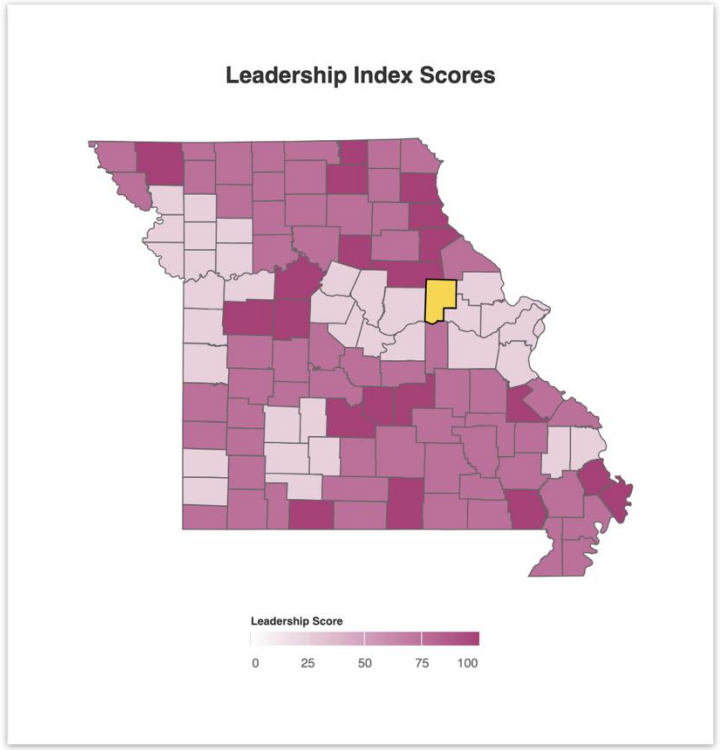
LEADERSHIP

Select County: Montgomery County, MO



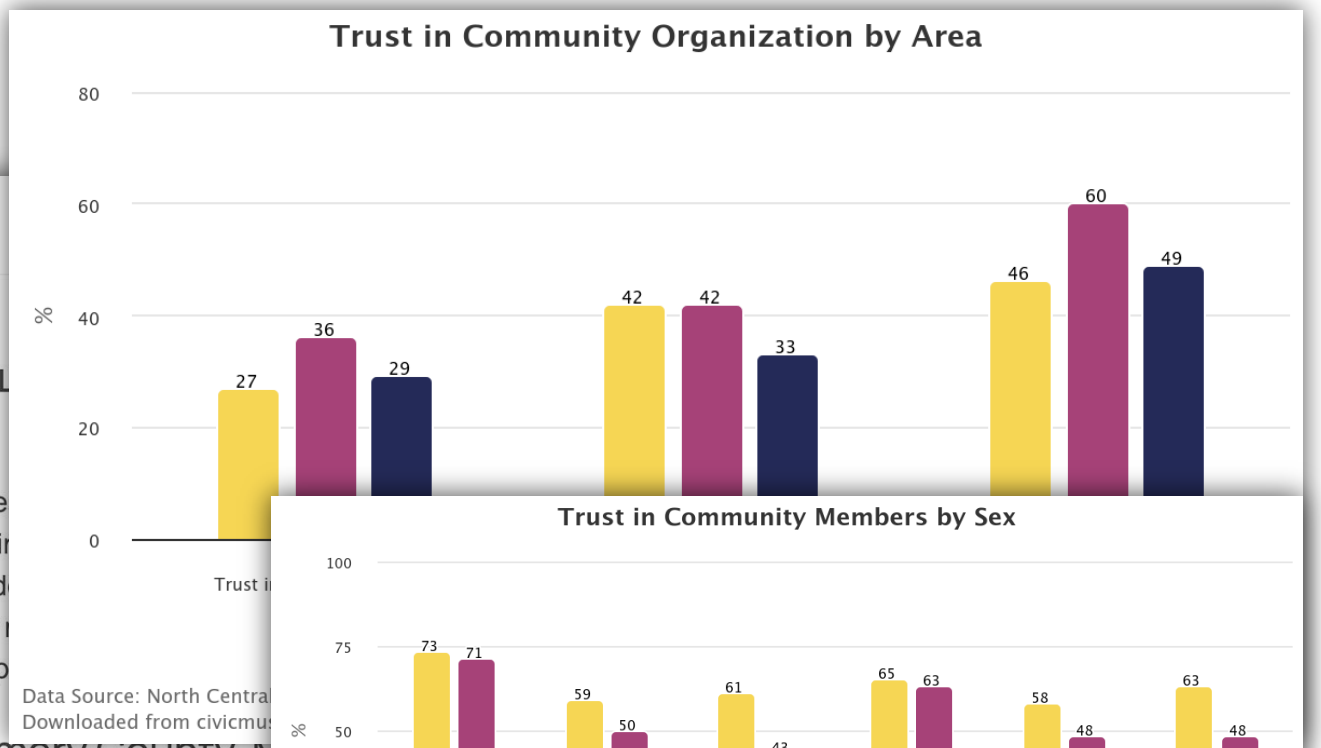
How Strong is L
Community?

Leadership score
have trust in thei
leaders. Low lead
trust, feelings of
of leadership opp

Montgomery County, M

75

Leadership Score



Data Source: North Centra
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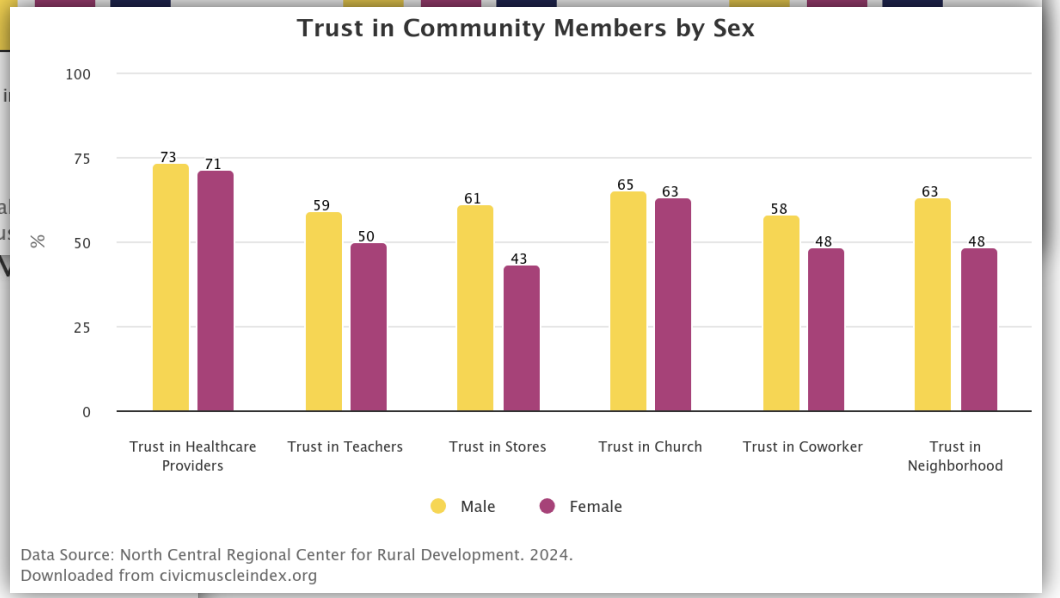

Data Source: North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. 2024.
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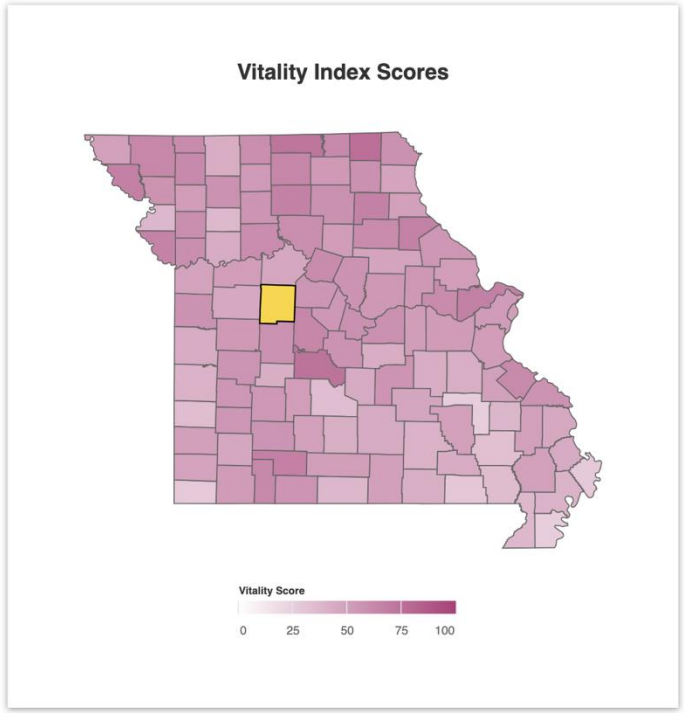
VITALITY

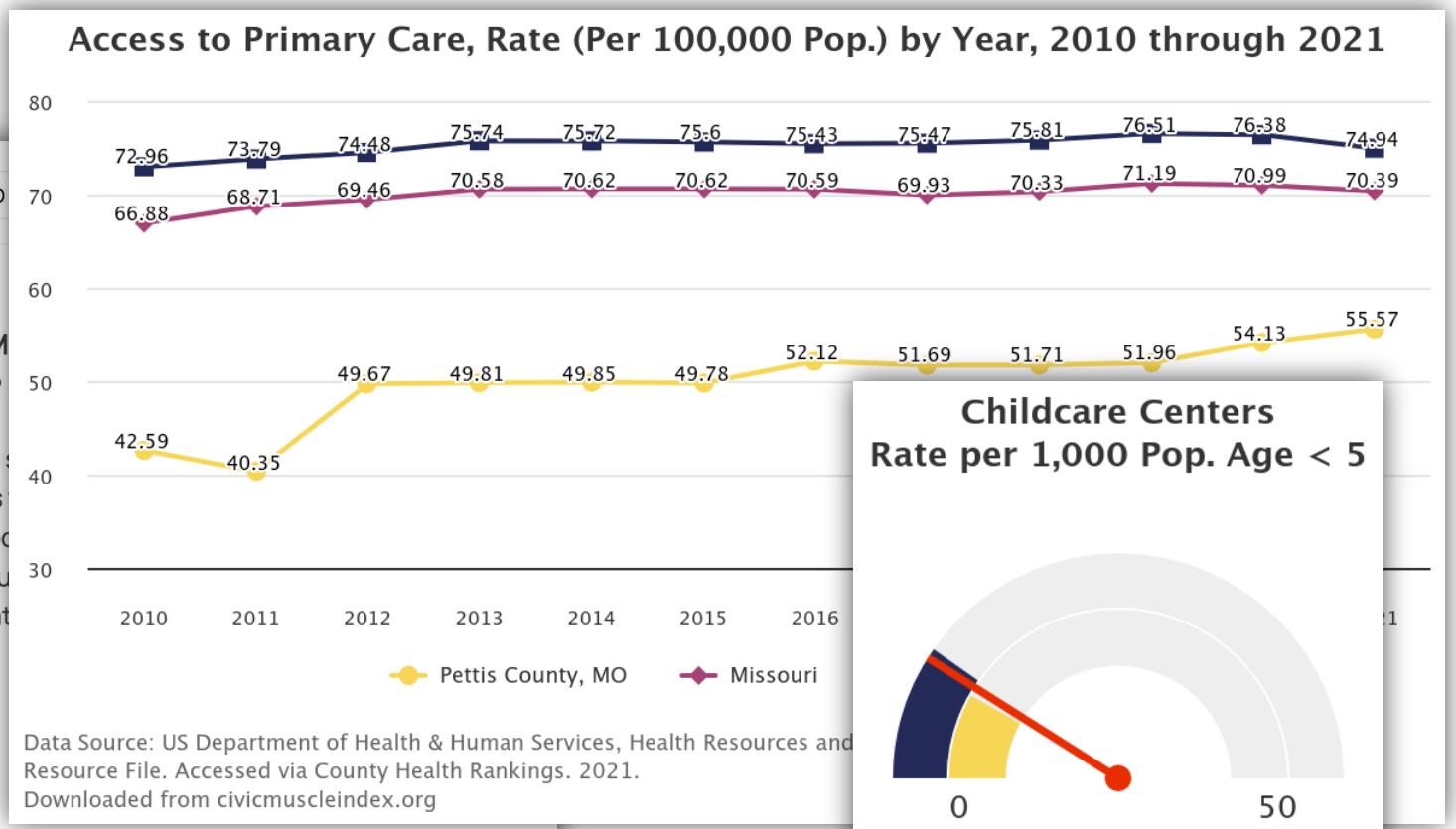
Select County Pettis County, MO



How M
Have?

Vitality
access
neighbo
Commu
graduat

Vitality Score



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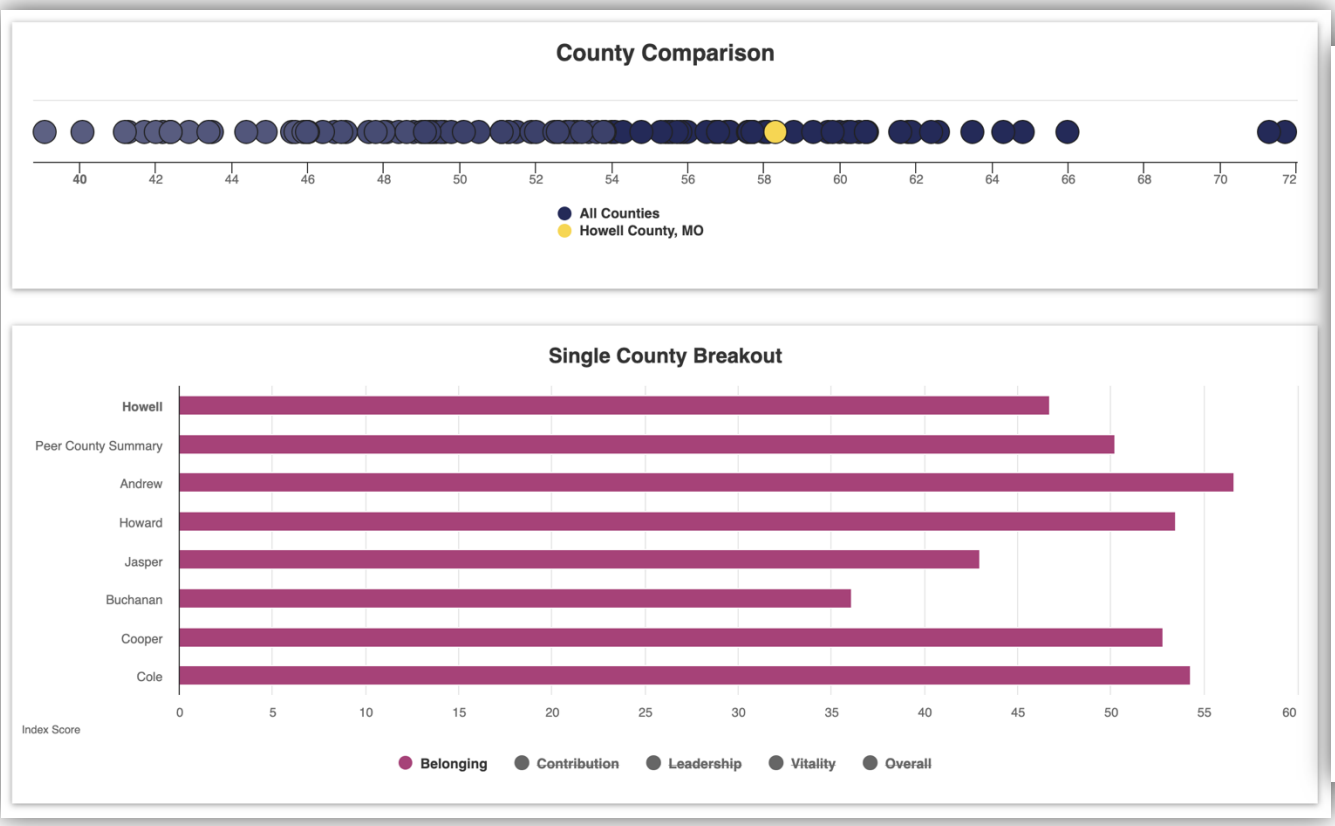
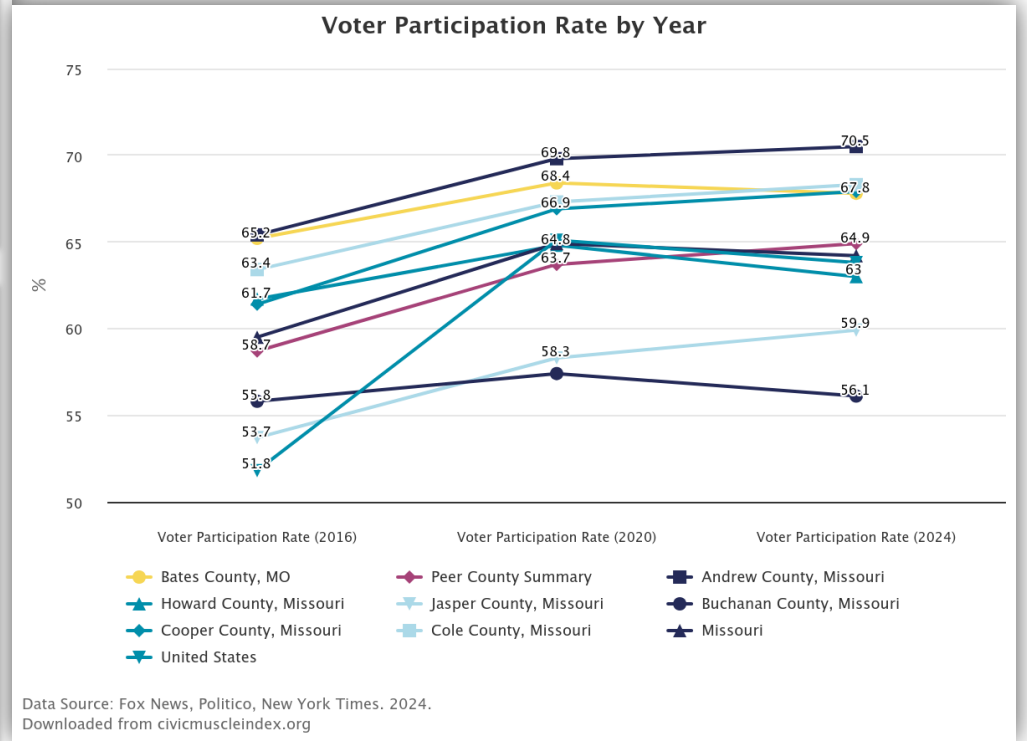
PEER COUNTY COMPARISON





Data Source: Fox News, Politico, New York Times. 2024.
Downloaded from civicmuscleindex.org

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DEEP DIVE

St. Louis City

ST. LOUIS CITY

- Using Civic Muscle Index to assess impact of leadership program
- Goal: Increase sense of belonging, contribution and vitality by 5% over 3 years
- Awarded $928,567 by James S. McDonnell Foundation

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WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK!

We just launched this month and are eager for engagement!

How would you use this in your state?

How would you like to partner?

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THANK YOU!