

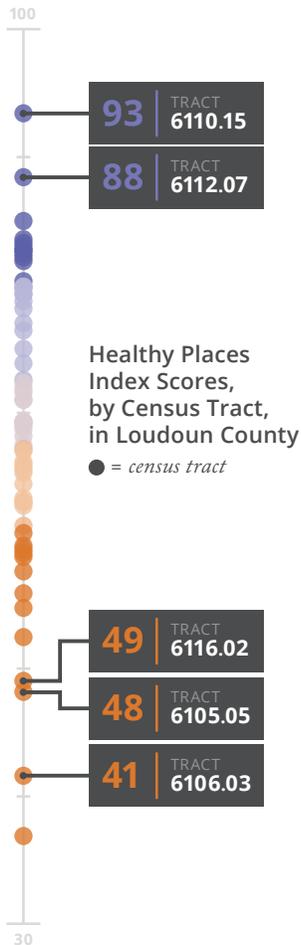
LOUDOUN COUNTY

At first glance, Loudoun County is a healthy place to live. It ranks among the healthiest counties in the nation, but closer examination reveals wide variation in health across neighborhoods and census tracts. For example, life expectancy—how long a newborn is expected to live—varies by 11 years, depending on where in Loudoun County a child is born. Other health measures also vary greatly.

Health itself, and the inequities in health we see across Loudoun County, are about more than health care. Health is shaped by education, economic and other household resources, housing, transportation, and our environment—both physical (e.g., parks) and social (e.g., racial discrimination).

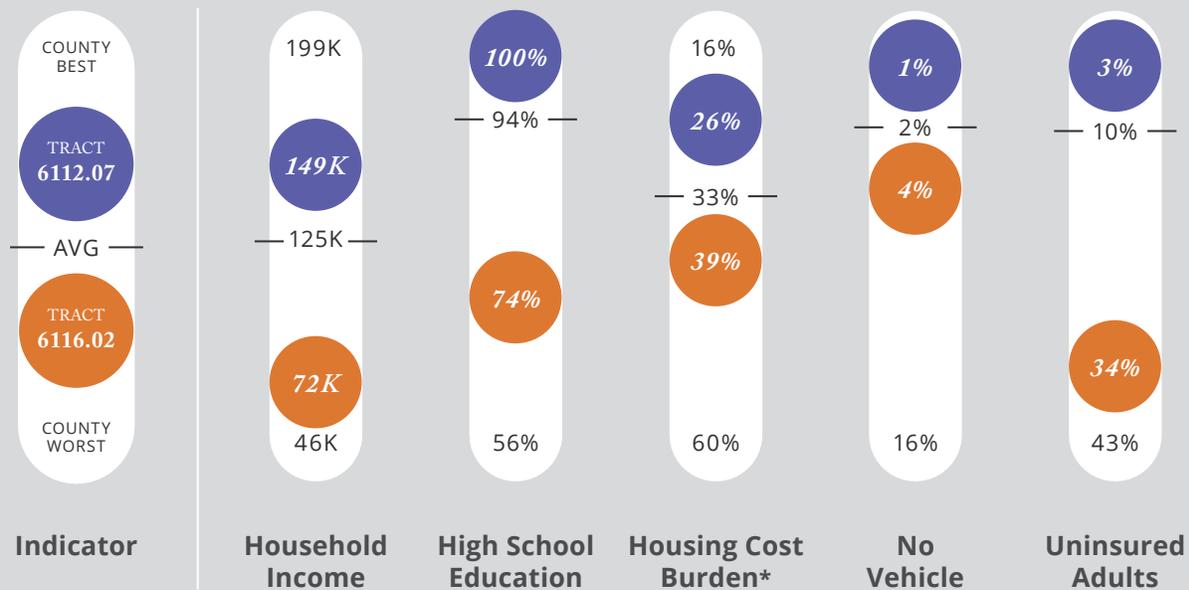
At the request of the Northern Virginia Health Foundation and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University developed a new tool, called the Healthy Places Index (HPI), to provide the public a convenient way to measure the health of neighborhoods in Northern Virginia. The HPI uses data on dozens of indicators, taken from each of the census tracts, to predict the health of communities. The advanced statistical computations used to produce the HPI yielded a stunning finding—education and economic resources accounted for 60% of the variation in life expectancy we see across the region. Housing and transportation explained 26%, and health care accounted for only 6%.

The HPI measures the health of every census tract on a scale of 0–100; high numbers represent the best conditions. As with life expectancy, HPI



Gaps in Opportunity in Loudoun County

Indicators depict how greatly living conditions vary across Loudoun County. Residents of tract 6112.07 (HPI 88) enjoy more favorable conditions for health than those living in tract 6116.02 (HPI 49).



Above: Outcomes in tracts 6112.07 (in Cascades) and 6116.02 (in Sterling Park) compared to the top, bottom, and average results for Loudoun County

*Housing cost burden: 30% or more of income spent on housing costs

scores vary greatly across Loudoun County, from an HPI as low as 41 in census tract 6106.03 in Leesburg to a high of 93 in tract 6110.15 in Ashburn Village.

The differences in living conditions in places with high versus low HPI scores can be stark and often exist only a few miles apart. For example, in census tract 6112.07 in the Cascades area of Sterling, where the HPI is 88, residents have more education, income, and other resources for good health than do residents just two miles away in tract 6116.02 in Sterling Park, where the HPI is 49. In that Sterling Park tract, only 51% of adults have attended some college and 30% of households have income below 200% of the poverty level.

People of color are often disproportionately exposed to poor living conditions that affect their health. For example, in census tract 6105.05 in Leesburg, where the HPI is only 48, 57% of residents are Hispanic and 78% are recent immigrants (2000 or later).

Closing the gaps in Loudoun County—in health and opportunity—requires policies and investments to improve education, income, and the economic vitality of communities. It will also require a recognition of the institutional inequities that created many of these conditions—and that persist today. These investments will improve health while also strengthening the local economy, civic wellbeing, and regional growth. Access to health care is also important, but meaningful improvements in health require attention to living conditions.

Policymakers in local government, the business community, real estate developers, and community leaders are among the stakeholders who can change these conditions. The benefits extend beyond those most in need. Everyone in Loudoun County gains from improvements in health and economic wellbeing.



To see data for all census tracts in Loudoun County, please visit our interactive map at <https://novahealthfdn.org/interactive-map-opportunity>