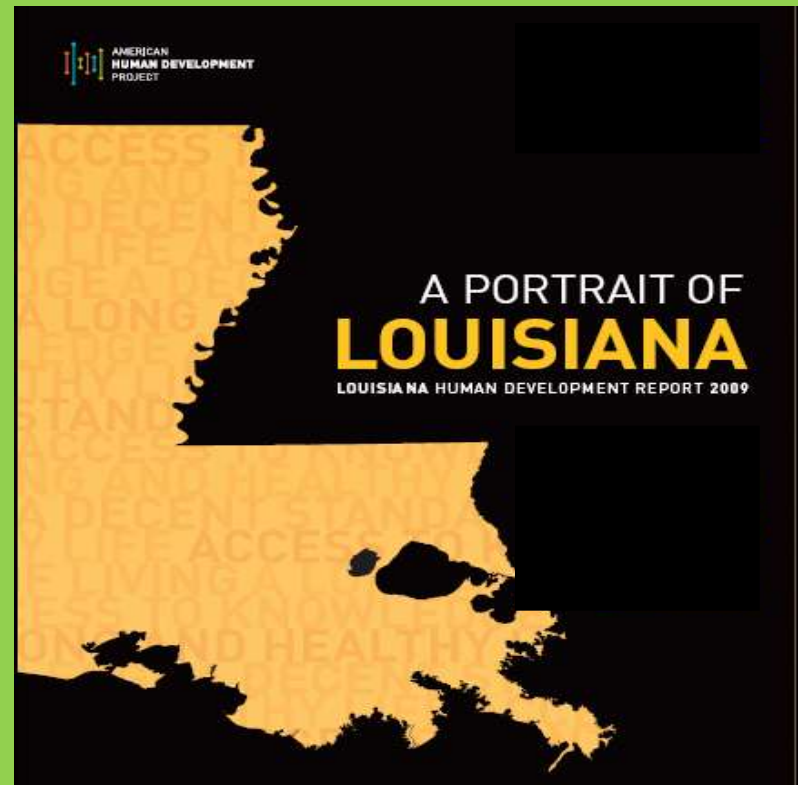


# A Portrait of Louisiana Louisiana Human Development Report

Rhonda M. Jackson  
Oxfam America  
19 August 10





# About the Project



A nonpartisan, non-profit initiative established to introduce to the United States a well-honed international approach and tool for measuring human well-being: **the human development approach** and the **human development index**.

Mission: to stimulate fact-based public debate about and political attention to human development issues in the United States and to empower people with an instrument to hold elected officials accountable.

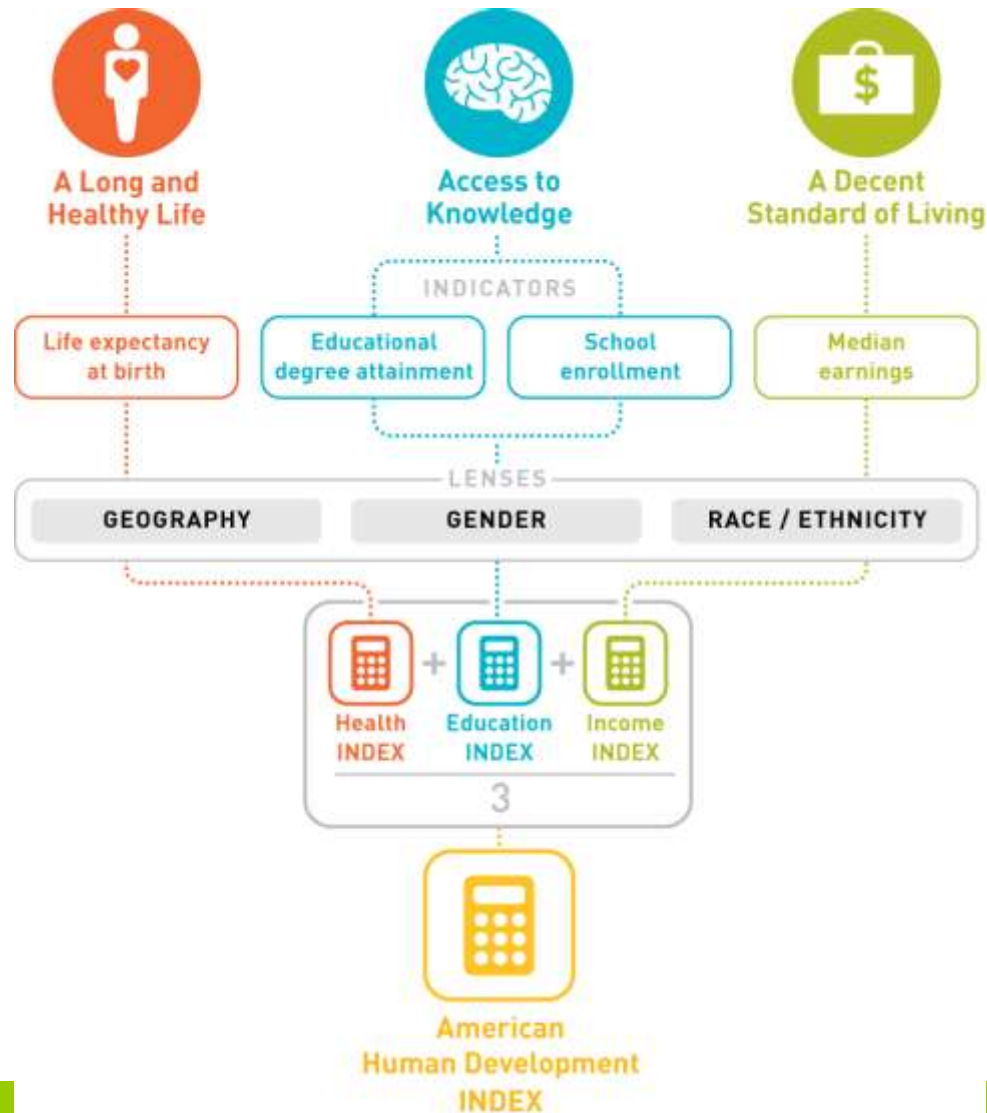


The **human development approach** was developed at the United Nations in the late 1980's, based in part on the work of Harvard economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen.

**Human development:** a process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being.

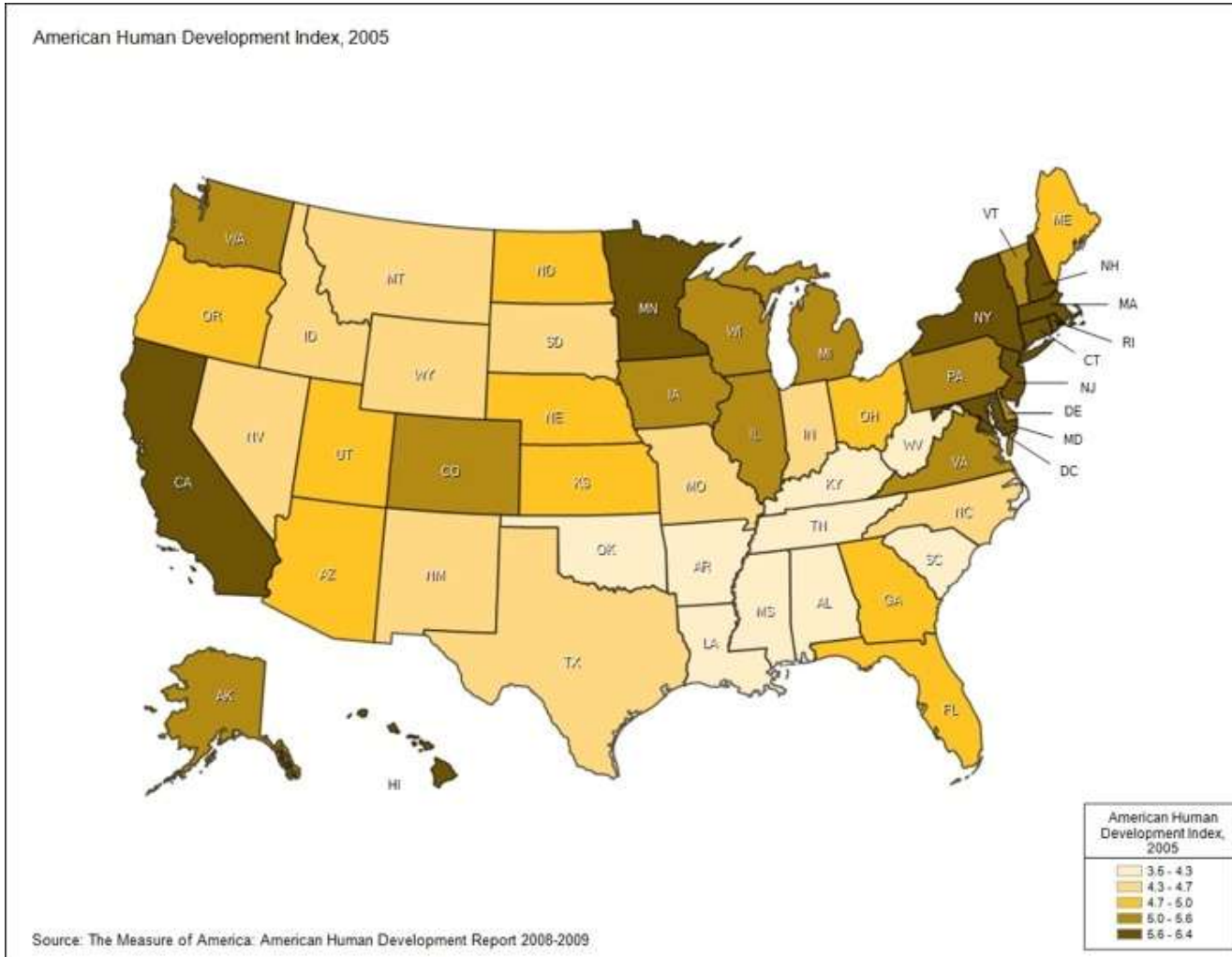
A response to the failure of purely **economic metrics** to capture how *people* are faring.

# Measuring Human Development



# The HD Index

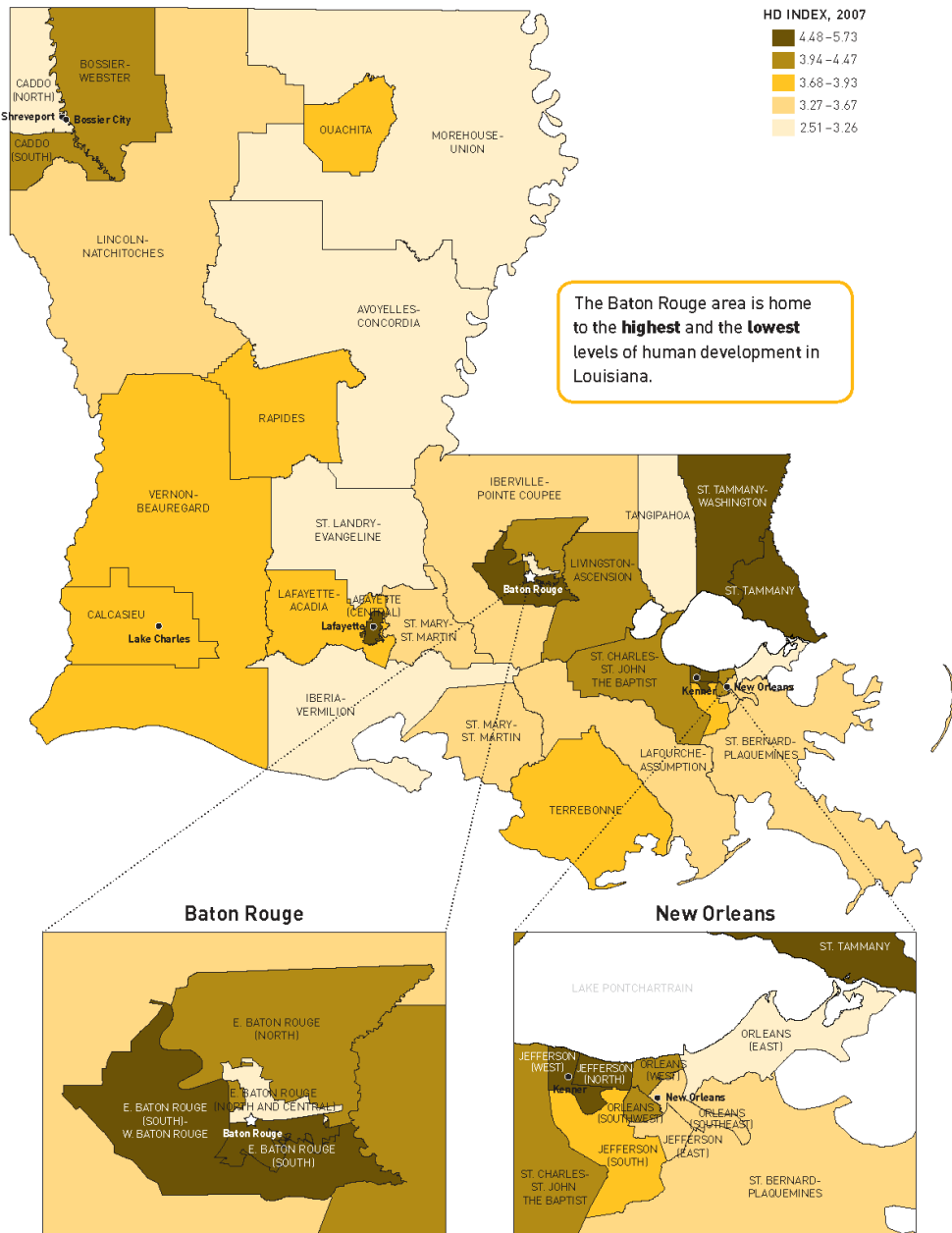
- Expressed as a number from 0 - 10
- Connecticut 6.37
- Louisiana 3.85
  
- As a state almost a quarter century behind the rest of the nation in terms of the well being of people.



# What the HD Index Reveals



## Louisiana's Parishes



## TOP 3 PARISH GROUPS:

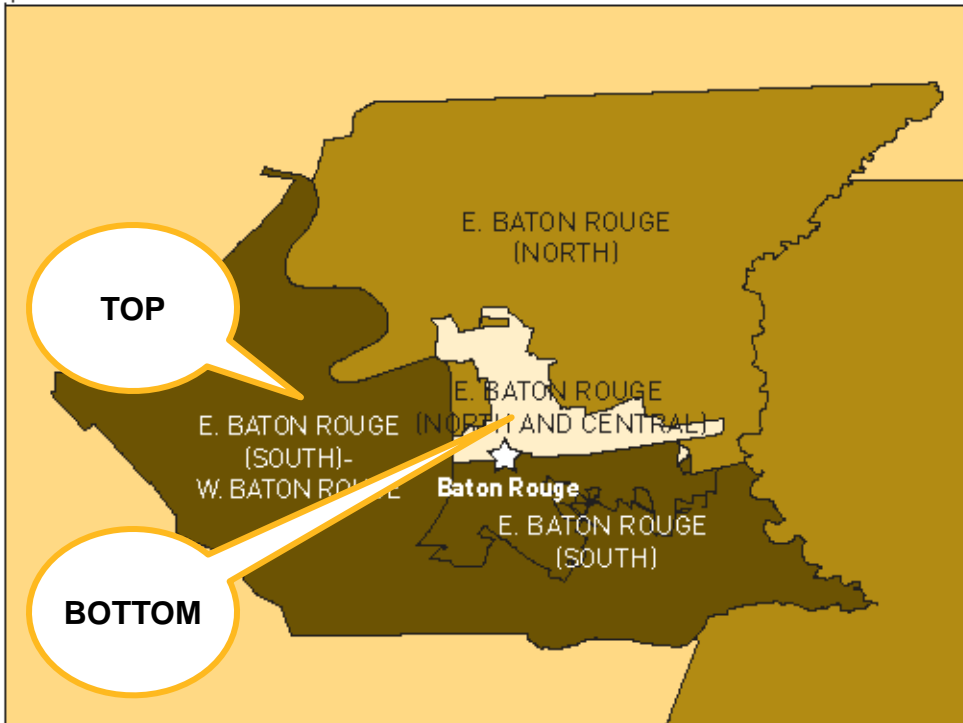
- East Baton Rouge (South)–West Baton Rouge
- Jefferson (North)
- East Baton Rouge (South)

## BOTTOM 3 PARISH GROUPS:

- Morehouse-Union
- Avoyelles-Concordia
- East Baton Rouge (North and Central)



## Baton Rouge



**A resident of East Baton Rouge (South)–West Baton Rouge:**

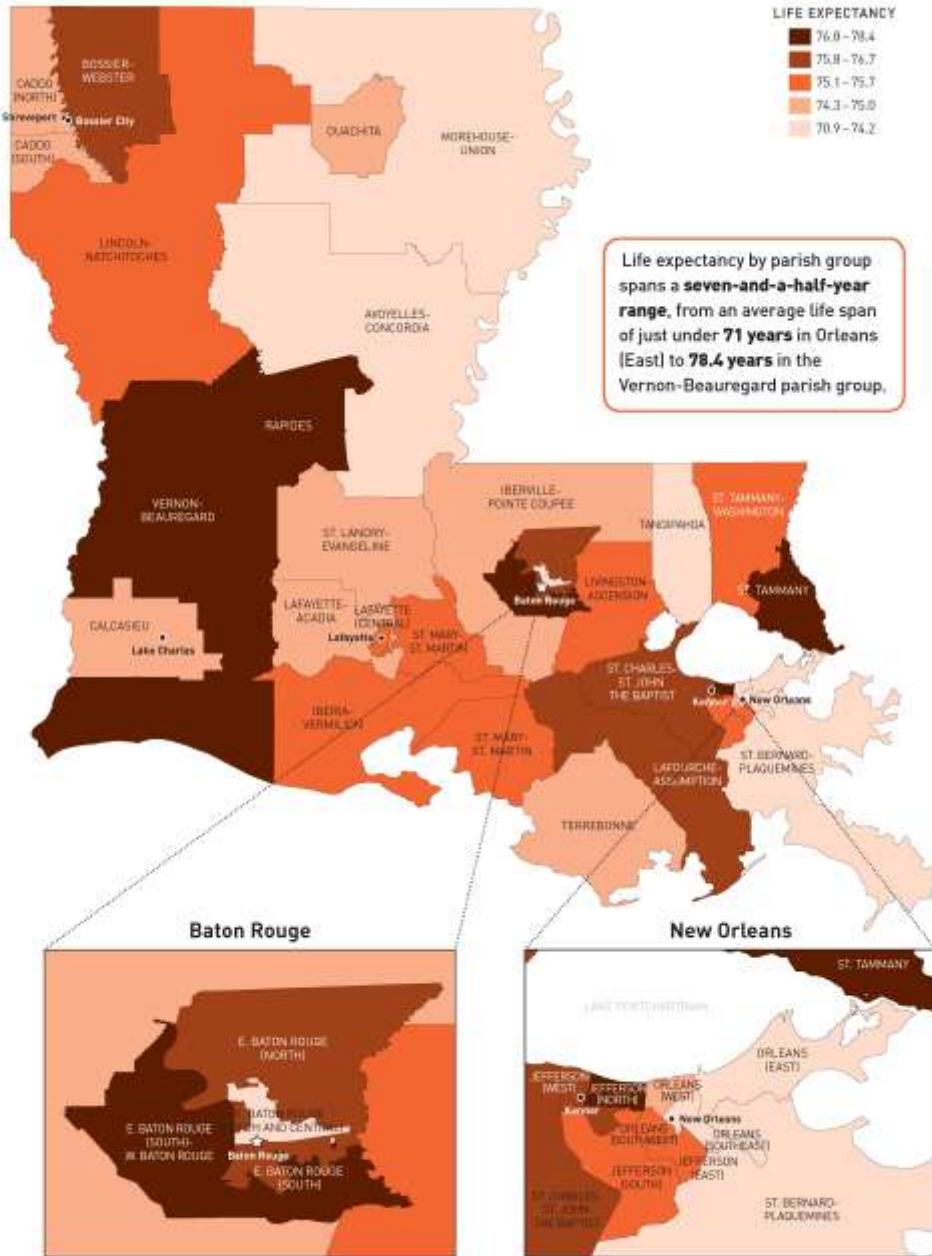
Lives nearly half a decade longer

Earns twice as much

Is almost 3 times more likely to have a B.A.

Is 3 times less likely to have dropped out of high school

**than a resident of East Baton Rouge (North and Central).**

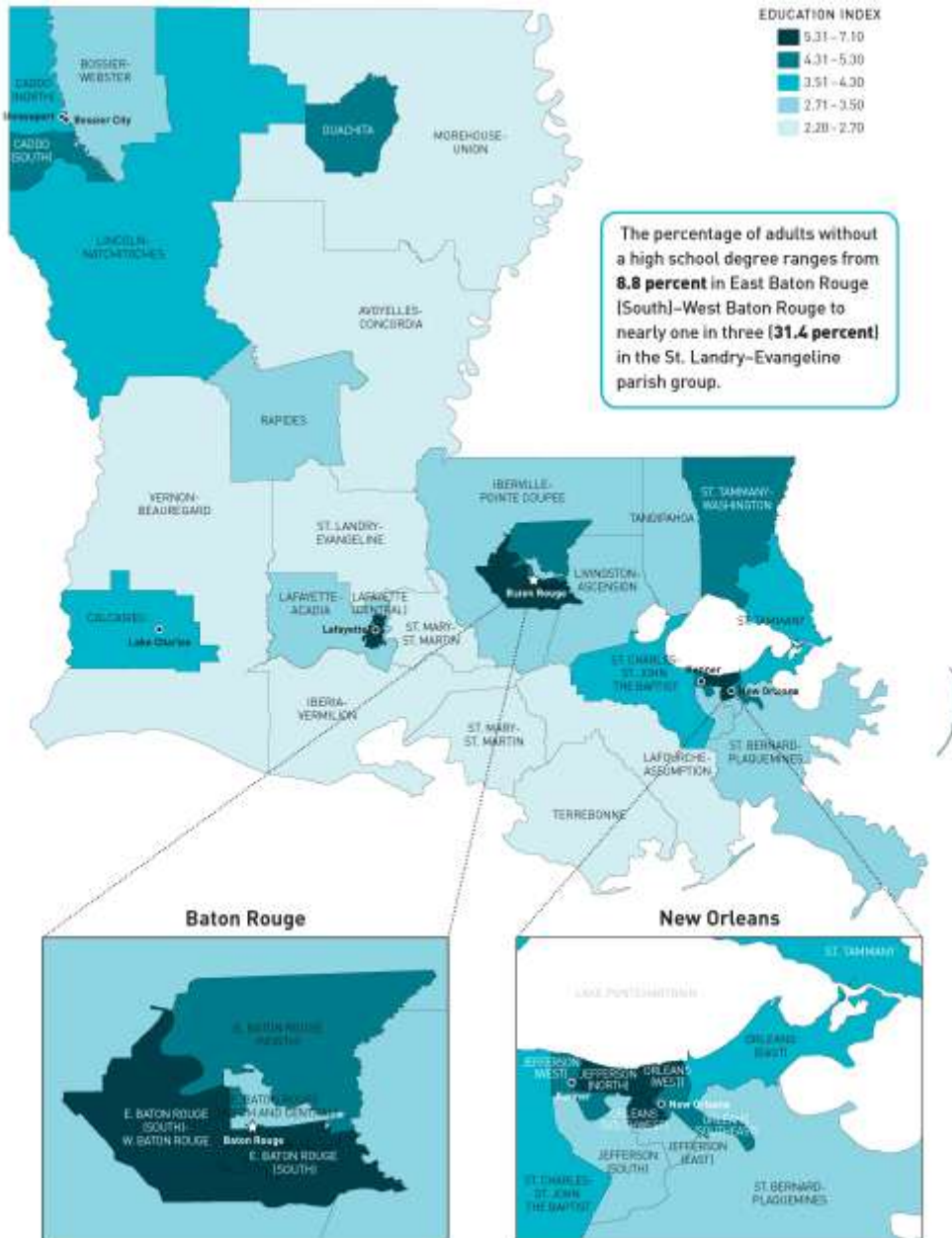


## Health Index

Life Expectancy at Birth

Life expectancy range of seven-and-a-half-years on average:

- **70.9** in Orleans (East)
- **78.4** in the Vernon-Beauregard parish group.

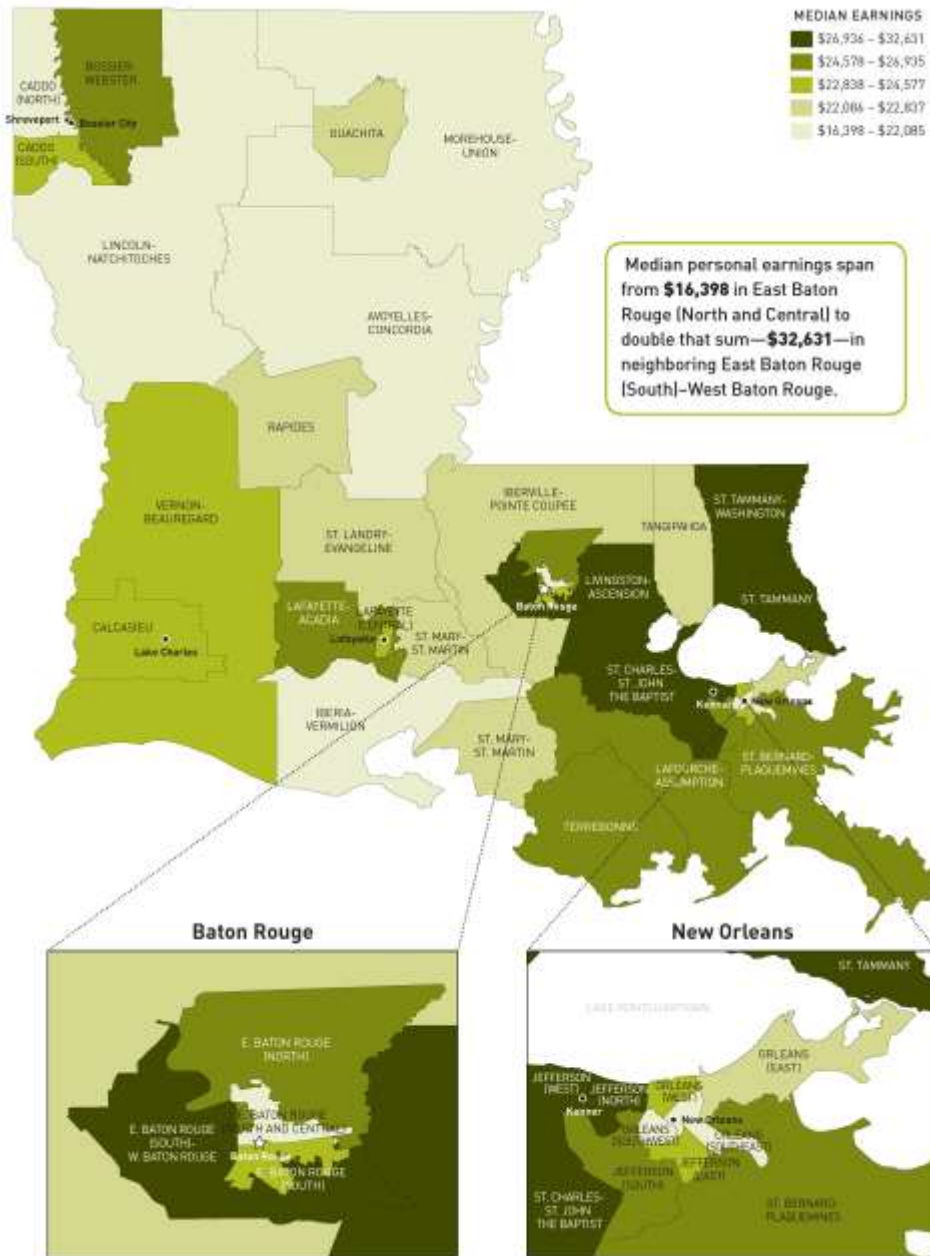


# Education Index

## Educational Attainment and School Enrollment

Range of adults without a HS degree:

- **Whites EBR South**  
 4.1 % Less than High School  
 95.9% at least high school diploma  
 55.3% at least bachelor's degree  
 23.8% graduate degree
- **Blacks EBR North**  
 28.1% less than high school  
 71.9% at least high school diploma  
 13.1% at least bachelors  
 4.5% graduate

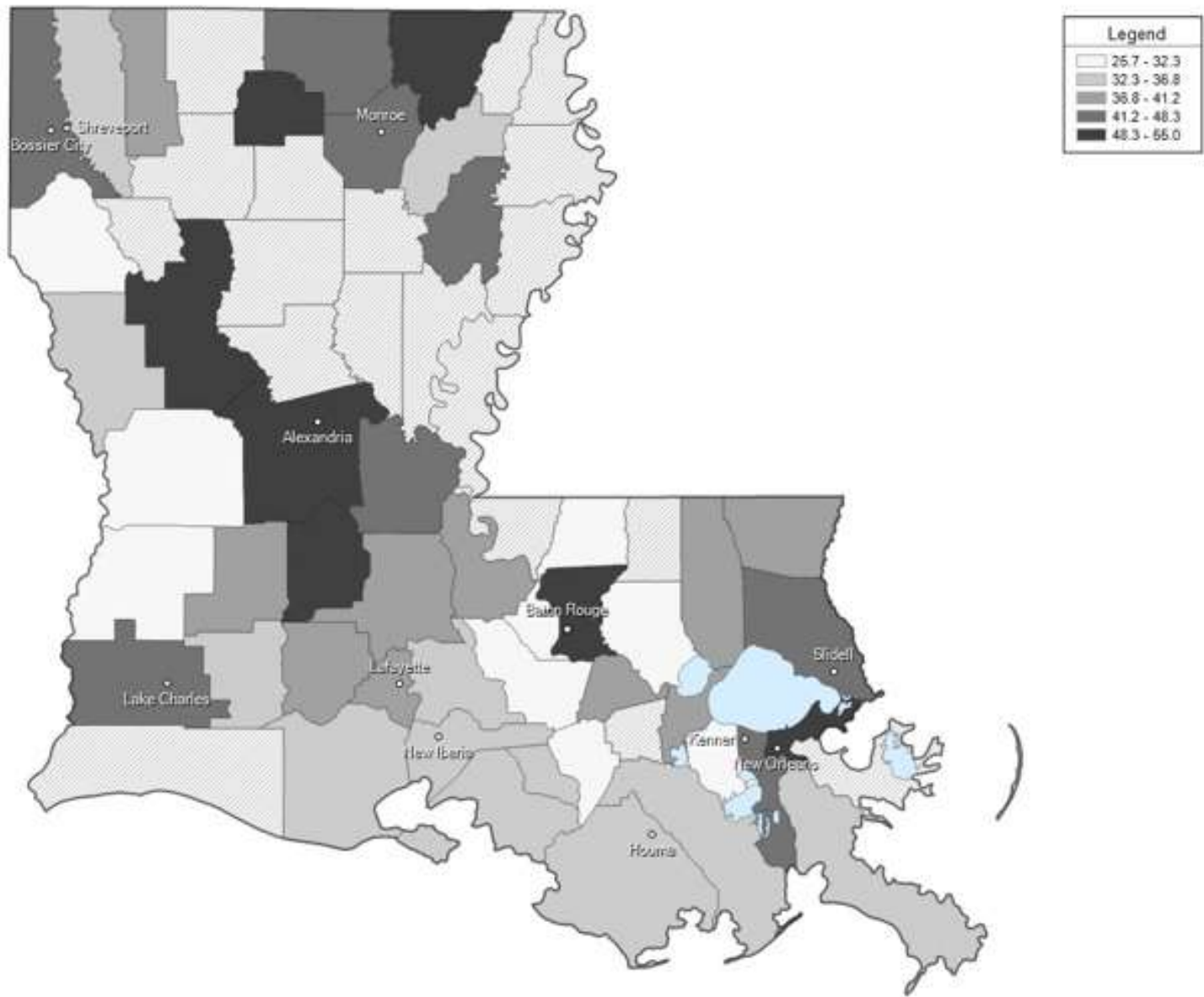


## Income Index

Median Earnings

Median personal earnings span from:

- **\$16,398** in East Baton Rouge (North and Central)
- **\$32,631** in neighboring East Baton Rouge (South)–West Baton Rouge.



Source: American Community Survey 2007, 3-year estimates

# Boosting Louisiana's Index Scores



## What will it take?



## HEALTH

- **Improve the health of African American men.**

Their premature death, often from preventable causes, is a source of heartbreak and economic distress.

- **Reduce infant mortality by improving the health of African American girls and women.**

Risk factors such as inadequate prenatal care, teen pregnancy, and poorly treated chronic health conditions among girls and women must be addressed to reduce infant death rates.



## EDUCATION

- **Improve the quality and quantity of education in Louisiana.**  
Education is the engine of opportunity and a key determinant of income, health, civic participation, and crime outcomes.

Research jointly conducted by the American Human Development Project and United Way suggests that if all adults in the state had at least a high school diploma:

- 85,000 fewer Louisianians would live in poverty,
- Median personal earnings would increase by \$1,700 per year,
- 10,000 fewer people would be incarcerated,
- 300 fewer babies would be imperiled by low birth weight.



## INCOME

- **Ensure that families can make ends meet.**

White men in Louisiana earn annual wages and salaries that are roughly \$8,400 higher than the U.S. median. White women, African American men, and, especially, African American women earn much less.

- **Boost incomes with programs that have worked well in other states**

Implement a state earned income tax credit, combat gender and racial discrimination, and invest in the skills of Louisiana's girls and African American children.

**Rhonda M. Jackson**  
**Gulf Coast Program Manager**  
**Oxfam America**

**[rjackson@oxfamamerica.org](mailto:rjackson@oxfamamerica.org)**

<http://www.oxfamamerica.org/publications/a-portrait-of-louisiana>

<http://www.measureofamerica.org>