

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Growing Number of Illinois Counties Facing Threats to Social and Economic Well-Being

Over half of counties in Illinois are on Heartland Alliance's Poverty Watch or Warning lists, new data show

CHICAGO, IL. July 23, 2018—Over half of Illinois counties are facing significant barriers to well-being, according to new data from the Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance. [These new data](#) show that Illinois residents are faring worse on poverty, unemployment, teen birth, and high school graduation rates. The new analysis found that **52 out of 102 Illinois counties are on either the Poverty Watch or the Poverty Warning lists**. This is an increase from last year, when 30 out of 102 Illinois counties were on the Poverty Watch or Poverty Warning lists.

[View the data here.](#)

“The rise in the number of counties on the Poverty Watch and Warning lists only confirms what we at Heartland Alliance see every day: that Illinois communities need meaningful investments, economic opportunity, and policies that work to bring equity to all communities,” said Heartland Alliance’s Director of Research, Katie Buitrago. “The data we released today can help people working to making change in their communities understand the conditions on-the-ground and make better decisions about how to move the needle on poverty.”

[The County Well-Being Index](#), created by the Social IMPACT Research Center, highlights counties that are experiencing particularly negative conditions and trends on four key indicators: poverty, unemployment, teen births, and high school graduation. The counties are evaluated using a point system, **with a higher number of points indicating a worse score**. A county receives a point if its rate is worse than the state average and/or if it has worsened since the previous year, for a total of 8 possible points.

Counties on the Poverty Watch list have an indicator score of 4 or 5 and need to be monitored by local leadership, while counties on the Poverty Warning list have an indicator score of 6, 7, or 8 and need to initiate corrective action (such as adequately funding education, quality job creation, and human services).

This newly released county and local data about poverty and well-being in Illinois are available at the [Social IMPACT Research Center's website](#).

In addition to the County Well-Being Index, the Social IMPACT Research Center released county, [Chicago metro area](#), and [Chicago community area-level](#) data on a broad range of indicators related to poverty and well-being. These indicators include poverty, rent burden, employment, vacancy, and more. IMPACT will host a [webinar](#) on **July 24th from 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM CDT** to demonstrate how the public, media,

government entities, and non-profit service providers can use the data to understand local needs and help combat poverty. [Register for the webinar.](#)

Counties on the Poverty Warning list include:

- Calhoun
- Mason
- Morgan
- Stephenson
- Wayne

Counties on the Poverty Watch list include:

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| • Alexander | • Tazewell | • Livingston |
| • Boone | • Vermilion | • Macon |
| • Clay | • Winnebago | • Marion |
| • Crawford | • Brown | • Marshall |
| • Gallatin | • Champaign | • McDonough |
| • Henry | • Cumberland | • Montgomery |
| • Jackson | • De Witt | • Peoria |
| • Lawrence | • Edgar | • Piatt |
| • Massac | • Franklin | • Pike |
| • McHenry | • Grundy | • Pope |
| • McLean | • Hamilton | • Putnam |
| • Moultrie | • Hardin | • Union |
| • Pulaski | • Jefferson | • Wabash |
| • Saline | • Jersey | • Warren |
| • Sangamon | • Knox | • Williamson |
| • Stark | • LaSalle | |

This data is the second phase of Heartland Alliance’s annual poverty report release. Our narrative report will be released this fall.

For more information, contact Amber Crossen at acason@heartlandalliance.org

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[Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights](#) – Heartland Alliance, one of the world’s leading antipoverty organizations, works in communities in the U.S. and abroad to serve those who are homeless, living in poverty, or seeking safety. It provides a comprehensive array of services in the areas of health, housing, jobs and justice – and leads state and national policy efforts, which target lasting change for individuals and society.