



State of the South 2014: Key data points

- In the Forbes rating of “**Best Places for Business and Careers,**” six Southern metros placed in the top 10 among the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the nation. Raleigh, N.C., placed first, followed by Nashville, Tenn. (6th), Charlotte, N.C. (7th), Dallas, Texas (8th), Atlanta, Ga. (9th), and Houston, Texas (10th). In contrast, Raleigh ranked 92nd in a **measurement of inequality**, Nashville 67th, Charlotte 36th, Dallas 46th, Atlanta 28th, and Houston 31st.
- A United Nations report recently projected that North Carolina’s two powerhouse cities—**Raleigh and Charlotte—would grow by 70 percent by 2030**, leading the list of U.S. cities of more than 500,000. (Southern cities dominated the top 15 in projected rates of growth.) Meanwhile, Census data assembled by the Brookings Institution showed that the poor population of Charlotte grew from 160,000 to 314,000 from 2000 to 2012, and from 66,000 to 130,000 in Raleigh, nearly doubling in each city.
- In public education, **spending per pupil declined in all Southern states, except Tennessee**, from fiscal year 2008 to 2014. Spending fell by as little as \$60 per pupil in West Virginia and \$150 in Florida to as much as \$700 in Georgia and \$1,200 in Alabama. Between fiscal year 2009 and 2014, state support for higher education fell in all Southern states but North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.
- In terms of race and ethnicity, **today’s youth and young adults present a significantly different, more diverse, profile than that of older Southerners**. Of people in the 15–24 age bracket, half are white, 22 percent black, 19 percent Hispanic, with the remainder including American Indians, Asians, and people of two or more races or ethnicities. In Texas and Florida, where more than 40 percent of the South’s population lives, the population is even more diverse. In Texas, 34 percent of 15- to -24-year-olds are white, 41 percent are Hispanic or Latino, and 12 percent are black. The same age group in Florida is 45 percent white, 21 percent black, and 26 percent Hispanic or Latino.
- **Underemployment is substantially higher** among workers under age 25 than among all workers in every Southern state. Underemployed people include a combination of jobless people actively seeking work, people working part-time who want full-time jobs, and people who have given up after seeking work in the past year. Seven states—Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—had underemployment rates higher than the national rate of 27 percent in 2013. National data produced by the Center for Economic and Policy Research show an unemployment rate for recent black college graduates higher than 12 percent, double the unemployment rate for all graduates. More than 55 percent of recent black college graduates work in jobs that do not require a bachelor’s degree, compared to 45 percent of all recent college graduates.
- Among 16- to 19-year olds who are in the labor force—meaning they actively seek work—**young African-American Southerners have an especially high unemployment rate**—46 percent. That’s compared to unemployment rates of 29 percent for Hispanics

and 26 percent for whites. Among the seven out of 10 young adults (20 to 24 years old) in the labor force, unemployment is substantially lower. Still, a major gap exists: Whites and Hispanics have a 14 percent unemployment rate, far below the 27 percent unemployment rate among young black adults.

- Adding together households in the lowest fifth of income and the second lowest fifth shows that **four out of 10 households in the South have incomes below \$40,000**. Only Virginia stands apart, with its second fifth reaching up to \$49,000. Mississippi's second fifth goes up to a mere \$28,600 in income. The second fifth in the remaining Southern states fall between \$39,700 (Texas) and \$30,800 (West Virginia).
- In the South, the **median income of high school graduates is \$26,500**; for people with **some college, \$32,299**; and for **four-year graduates, \$48,317**. Across all educational attainment levels, **a distinct gender pay gap remains**, with median income higher for men than for women.
- In general, of a cohort of **100 ninth graders**:
 - **25 to 40 do not graduate from high school** in four years
 - Roughly **25** graduate from high school but **not go directly to college**
 - **15** out of the 100 would enroll in college but **don't make it through their second year**
 - **Fewer than 20** out of those 100 once-9th graders **end up with an associate's or bachelor's degree** in three to six years, depending on program type, in most Southern states
- Southern states incarcerate 45 percent of all state-held inmates in the nation. **African-Americans represent more than one-third of local inmates and state prisoners**, well above their share of the population. Four out of 10 prisoners are between the ages of 18 and 29.