

Deaths of Despair Methodology

For analysis performed by The Center on Rural Innovation

The causes of death associated with alcohol, drug, and suicide follow International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD10) codes.

All deaths of despair cause codes are based on the codes used by Case and Deaton in their 2020 book, [*Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*](#).

The mortality counts with geographic codes were obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) [WONDER database](#). These metrics include population, total deaths, crude rate (per 100,000 population) with a 95% confidence interval, and age-adjusted rate (per 100,000 population) with a 95% confidence interval. Due to privacy concerns, the CDC suppresses sub-national deaths when the count of deaths is lower than 10. To avoid data suppression as much as possible, some parameters were grouped to achieve broader data coverage (i.e., grouping annual data to the 5-year period of 2014-2018). At the time of this publication, data from 2018 was the most current data available from CDC WONDER. The data is also available under multiple categories including sex, race, age groups, or Hispanic origin, which allows for comparison of specific mortality rates among different demographic groups.

Other social-economic indicators were collected from the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2014-2018) and the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA). Indicators such as median household income, unemployment rate, poverty level, education attainment, or religious adherents rate could also play an important role in understanding deaths of despair.

About the Center on Rural Innovation (CORI)

The [Center on Rural Innovation](#) (CORI) is a national nonprofit action tank advancing economic prosperity in rural America. Our comprehensive approach to digital economic development and entrepreneurship includes building a nationwide network of local economic change agents, using mapping tools and data analytics to highlight opportunities that exist in small towns, making direct investment in underserved rural entrepreneurs, and closing the digital divide so all Americans can participate in a 21st-century digital economy.

To learn more about CORI, visit our website or send us an [email](#).