

What gets measured gets improved



■ POSITIVE DIRECTION ■ NEGATIVE DIRECTION

Kindergarten readiness		
	71.7% in 2013-14	+0.8% State average
This measures the percentage of 5-year-olds found kindergarten-ready when evaluated in the first month of the school year. Kindergarten-ready students tend to have greater success throughout their academic careers. Escambia's rate was 66.2% in 2013-14, while Santa Rosa's was 81%.		

Free & reduced-price lunch			High school graduation rate			College graduates		
	56% 2014-15 school year	+1% 2013-14 school year		72.9 in 2014	+3.1% from 2013		16.1% in 2013	+0.5% from 2009
This helps measure poverty in a community. Children living in households at or below 185% of the poverty level are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at their schools. For the 2014-2015 school year, Escambia's rate was 63.5%; Santa Rosa's was 41.9%.			This measures the percentage of students who completed their high school career within four years of starting it. A large gulf exists between Escambia County's graduation rate (66.1% in 2014) and Santa Rosa's (82.8% in 2014), but both districts have shown improvement.			Research shows that communities with higher percentages of college-educated residents have higher wages. In 2013, 15.5% of Escambia residents 25 and older had a bachelor's degree; in Santa Rosa, it was 17.3%. The state figure is 16.9%.		

Single-parent households			Rent-burdened households			Cost of child care		
	34.4% in 2013	-0.7% from 2012		50.6% in 2013	-0.6% from 2012		43.5% (Percent of income)	-12.8% from state average
Children living in single-parent families often face more economic and social hurdles than their peers from two-parent families. As of 2013, 40.4% of Escambia families and 24.2% of Santa Rosa families were single-parent households. The state average was 35.1%.			The rule of thumb for affordable housing is that it should cost no more than 30% of your monthly income. This data measure the percentage of people who spend more than that on rent. As of 2013 in Escambia, the figure was 57.2%; in Santa Rosa it was 49.9%.			This measures average child care costs (for infant and preschoolers) as a percentage of median income for single-parent households. Statewide this number is 61%. For many parents, these high costs may lead them to leave the workforce entirely.		

Real per capita income			Median workforce age			Overweight & obesity rate		
	\$38.1k in 2013	+0.69% from 2012		39.8 in 2013	-0.3% from 2012		60.2% in 2013	-6.1% from 2010
Real per capita income represents the total GDP of our area, adjusted for inflation and divided by the population. It measures the average person's purchasing power and economic well-being. In Escambia County in 2013, the per capita income was \$38,389; in Santa Rosa, it was \$37,739. Both counties were below the state average of \$42,645.			It is no news flash that Florida is an aging state. But it is important to maintain — and increase — a healthy population of "young professionals" to add the intellectual and creative capacity that vibrant cities thrive upon. In 2013 in Escambia, the median workforce age was 38.7; in Santa Rosa it was 41.7.			Two out of three people in the Pensacola metro area are either overweight or obese, meaning they have a body mass index of 25 or higher. Obesity-related health problems diminish worker productivity and add cost to the health care system. Escambia County's rate was 59.8%, while Santa Rosa's was 60.9%. The state average was 62.8%.		

Labor force participation			Middle class households			Voter turnout		
	62% in 2013	-4.4% from 2012		65.6% in 2015	+0.5% from 2010		47% in 2014	-0.5% from 2010
The unemployment rate is often reported as a measure of joblessness, but it leaves out people who quit looking for work. Labor force participation shows how many people who are eligible to work are doing so. In 2013, the Escambia rate was 62%; in Santa Rosa it was 61.8%.			"Middle class households" — families who earn between \$20,000-\$99,000 in 2009 dollars — add to the economic activity, stability and vibrancy of a community. In 2015, 64.6% of Escambia households were middle class; in Santa Rosa it was 67.3%.			How healthy is democracy in your community? Voter turnout is one way to measure that. In the 2014 general election, 49.3% of Escambia voters cast ballots; in Santa Rosa it was 43.3%. The state turnout was 50.5%.		

Crime rate			Population			Bed taxes		
	3,567 (Per 100,000 in 2014)	-10.2% in 2013		473k in 2015	+1.1% from 2014		\$852.4K June 2015 (2% normalized)	+10.1% vs. June 2014
This measures the number of crimes reported per 100,000 citizens, including both violent crimes and property crimes. The state average in 2014 was 3,450.7 per 100,000. In Escambia County, the crime rate was 4,760.7, and Santa Rosa's was 1,296.7.			To prosper, a community needs to grow. Data show that after steeply increasing every decade between 1970 and 2000, our population stagnated. Inside the Pensacola city limits, the population actually decreased from 2000 to 2010.			The tourist development tax, also called the "bed tax," is collected from hotels and other lodging establishments and is a measure of tourism traffic in a community. In Escambia, bed tax collections were up 7.85% compared to June of 2014. In Santa Rosa, it was a 22.63% increase.		

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Dashboard points to sustainable progress

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Progress is never as rapid as we would like. However, the Studer Community Institute's recently updated dashboard shows we, as a community, are moving forward, and I believe our gains are sustainable. The numbers show that our two-county area improved in several areas, most notably in the continued economic recovery from the Great Recession. Our progress is being driven by high-quality job expansion that's under way at area companies, including projects in cybersecurity. Quality educational programs and improvements to our quality of life amenities can help cement this progress.



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most are in the Southeast. Many have a military presence or a focus on tourism. Metro data can be seen and compared at www.studer.org/dashboard. Those data come from federal sources. While the federal statistical agencies use excellent sampling, collection and validation methods, this means that many of the elements are published with a lag. Because of the time needed to process these huge datasets, those multi-metro numbers that show 2015 conditions, such as population, are estimates. While they are quite accurate, they are updated as more data flow in. Certain other 2015 data, such as bed tax collections, show actual local data and do not rely on estimates.

The most recent dashboard data for the metro, which looks at the combined statistics for Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, show an improved high school graduation rate, a slightly higher share of college graduates, and a kindergarten readiness measure just above the state average.

The key economy and standard of living measures — per capita income, share of rent-burdened households and share of single-parent households — all showed modest improvement.

The labor force participation rate —

Visit the Studer Community Institute's online dashboard for more detailed information and analysis, interactive charts, and comparisons to peer MSAs and state averages.

Studer.org/dashboard

the share of working-age people who are either employed or unemployed but seeking work — declined compared to last year. This decline took Pensacola closer to our peer metro areas and closer to our long-run average, suggesting that the previous year's high value was an anomaly. This relationship is the source of national debate. Members of the huge baby-boom generation approaching traditional retirement age appear more likely than past generations to retire early — but not always by choice. The Great Recession forced many into an unwanted early retirement.

Our population seems on trend to hit 500,000 by 2020. Population growth represents people voting with their feet. They stay or go based on their perceptions of economic opportunity and relative attractiveness of the community.

This year's increase in bed tax revenue speaks volumes about how our visitors, whether contemplating retirement, contemplating a new job or just contemplating a wonderful time at the beach, see our community. As always, the challenge with tourism jobs is they do not pay as well, on average, as the manufacturing and military jobs that were the mainstay of the Pensacola economy a generation ago.

To counter that, we must push for policies that will improve our school systems and help attract and grow businesses that provide high-wage jobs. We also must continue to monitor the dashboard to ensure our standard of living continues to improve.

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