Regional disparities in terms of GDP per capita have slightly increased in the United States over the last sixteen years. With the exception of the federal capital, the District of Columbia, GDP per capita levels are relatively similar across US states in comparison with OECD countries, as measured by the ratio of top 20% over bottom 20% of regions.

With productivity growth of 3.7% per year over the period 2000-16, North Dakota had the highest productivity growth rate among US states and strongly converged towards the national frontier in terms of GDP per worker. Delaware had the lowest productivity growth of the country with a growth rate of 0.1% per year between 2000 and 2016.

Unemployment is lower than the OECD average in almost all US states. Alaska has the highest unemployment rate (7.1% in 2017), three percentage points higher than in Hawaii, the state with the lowest rate.

Source: OECD Regional Database.
Notes: (1) Figure on regional gap in GDP per capita: OECD regions refer to the administrative tier of subnational government (large regions, Territorial Level 2); the United States is composed of 51 large regions. (2) Figure on index of regional disparity: top (bottom) 20% regions are defined as those with the highest (lowest) GDP per capita until the equivalent of 20% of national population is reached, this indicator provides a harmonised measure to rank OECD countries, using data for small regions (Territorial Level 3) when available, corresponding to 179 Economic Areas in the Unites States. Data based on prototype GDP by county 2012-2015 (released on www.bea.gov). (3) Productivity is measured as GDP per employee at place of work in constant prices, constant Purchasing Power Parities (reference year 2010).
Relative ranking of the regions with the best and worst outcomes in the 11 well-being dimensions, with respect to all 402 OECD regions. The eleven dimensions are ordered by decreasing regional disparities in the country. Each well-being dimension is measured by the indicators in the table below.

All US states rank among the top 20% of OECD regions for income, and at least one US state is among the top 20% of OECD regions in seven other well-being dimensions. The largest regional disparities are found in terms of community, jobs and health. The United States has the largest inter-regional disparities for health outcomes among OECD countries, with Hawaii ranking in the top 25% of OECD regions and Mississippi in the bottom 1%.

In the 20% best performing US states, 94% of the workforce has at least secondary education, 13 percentage points more than the OECD median. The 20% lowest performing US states still fare better than the OECD median region in unemployment, life satisfaction, rooms per person, voter turnout, labour force education and income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Perceived social network support (%)</th>
<th>92.1</th>
<th>91.4</th>
<th>95.5</th>
<th>87.7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs</td>
<td>Employment rate 15 to 64 years old (%)</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployment rate 15 to 64 years old (%)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Life Expectancy at birth (years), 2016</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age adjusted mortality rate (per 1 000 people), 2016</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>Life satisfaction (scale from 0 to 10), 2013</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Rooms per person, 2016</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to services</td>
<td>Households with broadband access (%), 2017</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>69.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Level of air pollution in PM 2.5 (µg/m³), 2015</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Homicide Rate (per 100 000 people), 2016</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic engagement</td>
<td>Voters in last national election (%), 2017 or lastest year</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Labour force with at least upper secondary education (%), 2017</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Disposable income per capita (in USD PPP), 2016</td>
<td>40 002</td>
<td>17 695</td>
<td>47 288</td>
<td>33 462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD Regional Database. Visualisation: https://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org

Notes: (1) OECD regions refer to the first administrative tier of subnational government (large regions, Territorial Level 2); the United States is composed of 51 large regions. (2) Household income per capita data are based on USD constant PPP, constant prices (year 2010).
In the United States, **75% of the population lives in cities** of more than 50,000 inhabitants. The share of population in cities with more than 500,000 people is **64%** compared to 55% in the OECD area.

Metropolitan areas in the United States account for **73%** of national GDP and **66%** of employment. Between 2000 and 2016, the US metropolitan areas generated **76%** of national GDP growth.

In terms of GDP per capita, 38 US metropolitan areas are among the top 20% of the 327 OECD metropolitan areas. When considering levels of PM 2.5, the metropolitan areas of Albuquerque (New Mexico), Seattle (Washington) and El Paso (Colorado) are the least polluted metropolitan areas in the US.

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**OECD Metroplitan Database**

*Note: Cities are defined here as functional urban areas, which are composed by high-density urban centres of at least 50,000 people and their areas of influence (commuting zone). For more information, see: [http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/functionurbanareasbycountry.htm](http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/functionurbanareasbycountry.htm)*

Updated the 5th of March 2019
Subnational government expenditure by function
As a share of total subnational government expenditure, 2016

**United States**

- Education: 31%
- Health: 25%
- Economic affairs: 14%
- Other: 12%
- General public services: 12%
- Social protection: 5%

**OECD average**

- Education: 25%
- Health: 18%
- Economic affairs: 14%
- Other: 15%
- General public services: 14%
- Social protection: 14%

Subnational expenditure per capita: **USD 10 533**

Subnational government expenditure amounts to **USD 10 533 per capita** in the United States compared to an OECD average of **USD 6 817**. In the United States, this is equivalent to **48.4% of total public expenditure** and to **18.3% of GDP**. In comparison, across the OECD, subnational government expenditure accounts for 40.4% of total public expenditure and for 16.2% of GDP. Education and health are the two largest spending items for subnational governments in the United States. Together they represent **56%** of subnational expenditure compared to 43% in the OECD area.

In the United States, **56.6% of total public investment** was carried out by subnational governments, similar to the OECD average of 56.9%.

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**Role of subnational governments in public investment**

**Subnational government public investment per capita, 2016**

**United States**

- Total public investment: **USD 1 785 per capita**
- Subnational government investment: **USD 1 010 per capita**

**OECD average**

- Total public investment: **USD 1 278 per capita**
- Subnational government investment: **USD 727 per capita**

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**Source**: OECD Subnational Government Structure and Finance Database.

**Note**: The function 'Other' includes housing and community amenities, recreation, culture and religion; environment; public order and safety.

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**OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2018**

The 2018 edition of OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance shows how regions and cities contribute to national growth and the well-being of societies. It updates its regular set of region-by-region indicators, examining a wide range of policies and trends and identifying those regions that are outperforming or lagging behind in their country.

**Consult this publication on line**: [https://oe.cd/pub/zn9](https://oe.cd/pub/zn9)