

Mapping Diversity in the United States

By the Beyond Diversity Resource Center Staff

Where you live strongly determines the cultural diversity around you. In 2005, the Beyond Diversity Resource Center compiled U.S. Census Bureau data for the 50 states and 20 most populous urbanized areas to complete a survey of diversity in the United States. Both states and urbanized areas were assigned a “diversity index score” based on the probability of encountering a person of a different race, while factoring in population density. The scores were listed as a ranking and illustrated in two color maps that accompany this article.

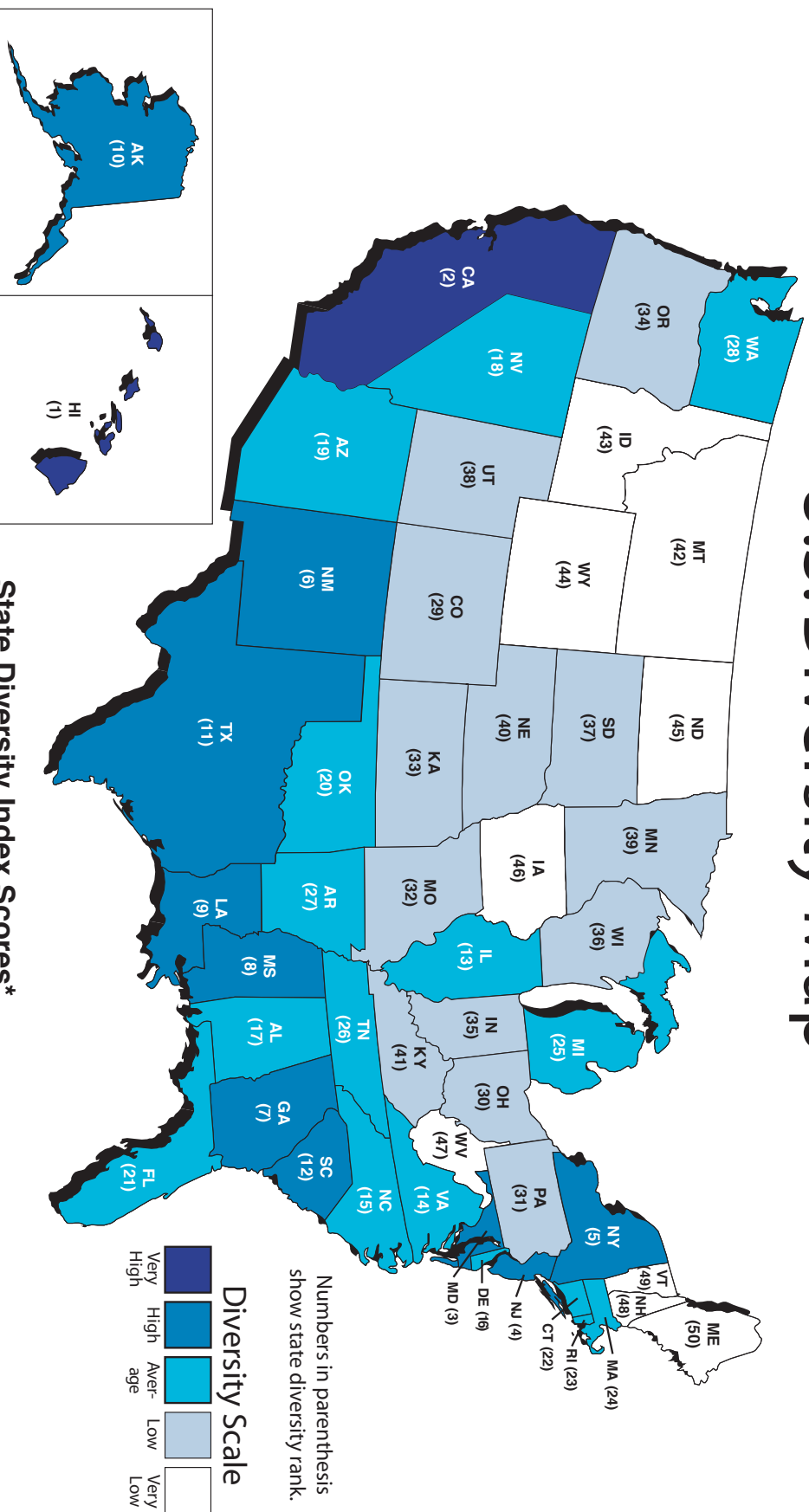
Based on diversity index scores, a person living in Hawaii is ten times more likely to encounter a person of a different race than is a person living in Maine. Similarly, a person living in the San Francisco-Oakland urbanized area is more than twice as likely to encounter a person of a different race than is a person living in the Minneapolis-St. Paul urbanized area. Because the diversity index scores measure not only the diversity of persons living in a state or urbanized area, but also how close persons live to each other, the survey gives a good general guide to the opportunity individuals have to meet others who are racially different from themselves.

The survey showed that Hawaii and California stood out as states with very high diversity. The northeastern states of Maryland, New Jersey and New York ranked high, as did the southwestern and southern states of New Mexico, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and South Carolina. States with the lowest diversity included Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, Iowa, West Virginia, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine. All of the twenty most populous urbanized areas except Minneapolis-St. Paul showed at least an average amount of diversity, and many showed high or very high diversity.

Diversity index scores are just a starting place for looking at diversity, however. Because the scores are best understood as a snapshot of the relative opportunity for diversity, they really indicate how hard an individual must work to include diversity within his or her life. Thus, in general a person living in Wyoming would have to work harder to meet and work with different race people than a person living in New Jersey.

Individual effort is key in capitalizing on the diversity. Even people residing in the most diverse places can live culturally isolated lives unless they work to include diverse people in their workplaces, schools and communities. Embracing diversity is more than assessing the mixture of people around you; it requires a commitment to build quality cross-cultural relationships, which is a significant factor in reducing prejudice and discrimination.

U.S. Diversity Map

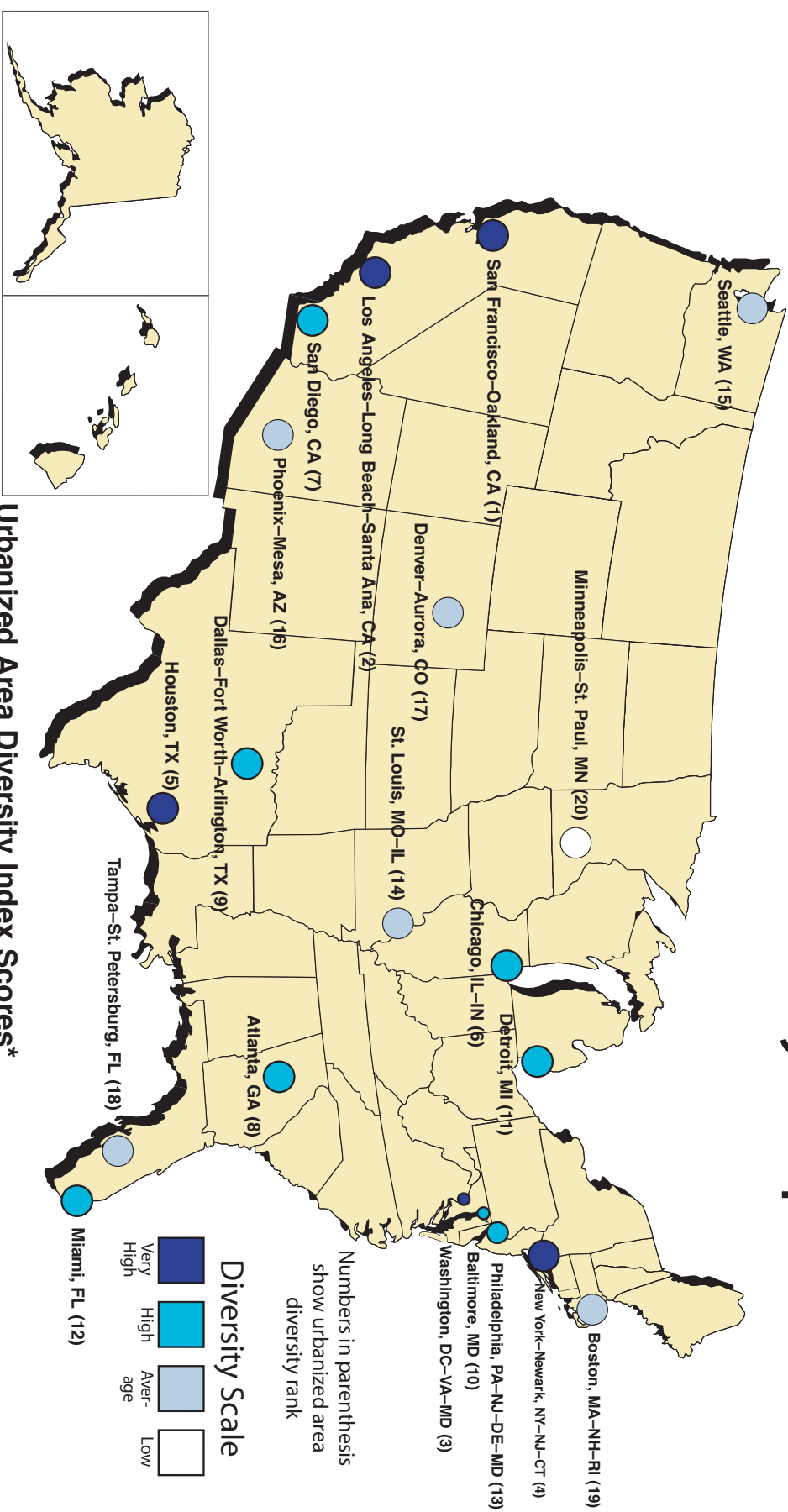


State Diversity Index Scores*

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|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|
| 1. | HI: | 73.2 | 11. | TX: | 47.6 | 21. | FL: | 39.8 | 31. | PA: | 28.8 | 41. | KY: | 19.3 |
| 2. | CA: | 62.0 | 12. | SC: | 47.4 | 22. | CT: | 39.3 | 32. | MO: | 27.5 | 42. | MT: | 17.6 |
| 3. | MD: | 56.4 | 13. | IL: | 45.5 | 23. | RI: | 37.2 | 33. | KA: | 25.7 | 43. | ID: | 17.1 |
| 4. | NJ: | 56.2 | 14. | VA: | 45.4 | 24. | MA: | 36.0 | 34. | OR: | 25.0 | 44. | WV: | 15.1 |
| 5. | NY: | 54.4 | 15. | NC: | 44.8 | 25. | MI: | 35.4 | 35. | IN: | 24.4 | 45. | ND: | 14.5 |
| 6. | NM: | 51.6 | 16. | DE: | 44.5 | 26. | TN: | 34.3 | 36. | WI: | 21.5 | 46. | IA: | 12.2 |
| 7. | GA: | 50.7 | 17. | AL: | 43.5 | 27. | AR: | 34.0 | 37. | SD: | 20.7 | 47. | WV: | 10.3 |
| 8. | MS: | 49.7 | 18. | NV: | 42.2 | 28. | WA: | 33.2 | 38. | UT: | 20.4 | 48. | NH: | 9.1 |
| 9. | LA: | 49.6 | 19. | AZ: | 41.6 | 29. | CO: | 31.1 | 39. | MN: | 20.3 | 49. | VT: | 7.0 |
| 10. | AK: | 48.9 | 20. | OK: | 41.0 | 30. | OH: | 29.2 | 40. | NE: | 19.7 | 50. | ME: | 6.4 |

*Based on year 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data; diversity index scores reflect the average probability of encountering an individual of a different race, while factoring in state population density by one percent.

Urbanized Area Diversity Map



Urbanized Area Diversity Index Scores*

| | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|------|-----|---------------------------|------|
| 1. | San Francisco–Oakland, CA | 74.9 | 11. | Detroit, MI | 50.1 |
| 2. | Los Angeles–Long Beach–Santa Ana, CA | 74.0 | 12. | Miami, FL | 48.4 |
| 3. | Washington, DC–VA–MD | 64.2 | 13. | Philadelphia, PA–NJ–DE–MD | 48.0 |
| 4. | New York–Newark, NY–NJ–CT | 63.4 | 14. | St. Louis, MO–IL | 42.9 |
| 5. | Houston, TX | 62.4 | 15. | Seattle, WA | 42.6 |
| 6. | Chicago, IL–IN | 57.3 | 16. | Phoenix–Mesa, AZ | 41.9 |
| 7. | San Diego, CA | 56.9 | 17. | Denver–Aurora, CO | 41.1 |
| 8. | Atlanta, GA | 56.4 | 18. | Tampa–St. Petersburg, FL | 34.5 |
| 9. | Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX | 56.0 | 19. | Boston, MA–NH–RI | 34.2 |
| 10. | Baltimore, MD | 54.8 | 20. | Minneapolis–St. Paul, MN | 32.3 |

*Based on year 2000 U.S. Census Bureau data for the 20 most populous urbanized areas; diversity index scores reflect the average probability of encountering an individual of a different race, while factoring in area population density by one-tenth of one percent.