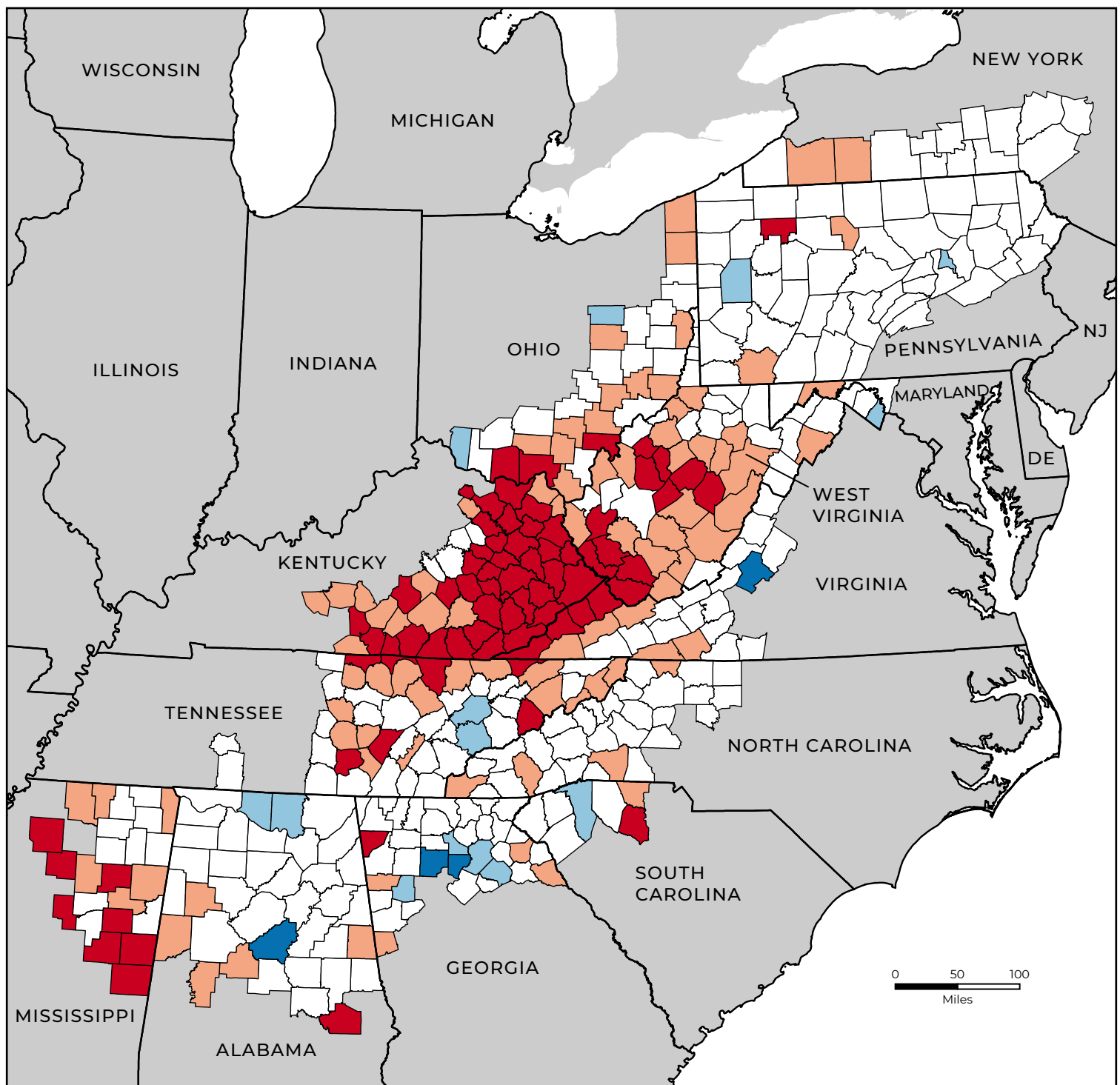


County Economic Status in Appalachia, Fiscal Year 2026

(Effective October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026)



The Appalachian Regional Commission uses an index-based county economic classification system to identify and monitor the economic status of Appalachian counties.

County Economic Levels

- Distressed (75)
- At-Risk (90)
- Transitional (240)
- Competitive (14)
- Attainment (4)



Map Created: May 2025

Data Sources:

Unemployment data: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, LAUS, 2021–2023

Income data: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, LAPI, 2023

Poverty data: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2019–2023

County Economic Status Classification System

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) uses an index-based county economic classification system to identify and monitor the economic status of Appalachian counties. The system involves the creation of a national index of county economic status through a comparison of each county's averages for three economic indicators—three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate—with national averages. The resulting values are summed and averaged to create a composite index value for each county. Each county in the nation is then ranked, based on its composite index value, with higher values indicating higher levels of distress.

County Economic Levels

Each Appalachian county is classified into one of five economic status designations based on its position in the national ranking.

Distressed

Distressed counties are the most economically depressed counties. They rank in the worst 10% of the nation's counties.

At-Risk

At-Risk counties are those at risk of becoming economically distressed. They rank between the worst 10% and the worst 25% of the nation's counties.

Transitional

Transitional counties are those transitioning between strong and weak economies. They make up the largest economic status designation. Transitional counties rank between the worst 25% and the best 25% of the nation's counties.

Competitive

Competitive counties are those that are able to compete in the national economy but are not in the highest 10% of the nation's counties. Counties ranking between the best 10% and the best 25% of the nation's counties are classified competitive.

Attainment

Attainment counties are the economically strongest counties. Counties ranking in the best 10% of the nation's counties are classified attainment.

ARC County Economic Status Designation by National Index Value Rank

