

Name: Third Places

Short Description: Number of third places, defined as places where people spend time outside of their home (“first place”) and their work (“second place”), per 100,000 people.

Data Source(s):

- **Name:** County Business Patterns (CBP)
- **Link to Source:** <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html>

Year(s): 2020

Source Geographic Level: ZIP Code

Stratification: Not applicable to third places.

Selection Rationale: Third places provide a location in communities for social interaction and social support outside of the home and workplace and contribute to a sense of connection and belonging. These community sites (including locations such as religious institutions, community centers, libraries, cafes, gyms, and other neighborhood businesses) can help to buffer against loneliness, stress, alienation.¹ Although this measure does not provide information about the relative quality of third places, the presence of third places is used to represent community assets that can be protective for mental wellness.

Strengths and Limitations:

- **Strengths:**
 - *[Importance]* The presence of third places in a community has been linked to higher perceived quality of life.² Additionally, a variety of types of third places (such as coffee shops, video arcades, markets, restaurants, and religious institutions) have been found to be linked to positive behaviors and outcomes associated with mental health coping behaviors such as higher self-reported happiness, use of mental health care, high self-esteem, and reduced attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) risk among various

¹ Finlay, J., Esposito, M.H., Kim, M., Gomez-Lopez, I.N., & Clarke, P. (2019). Closure of “third places”? Exploring potential consequences for collective health and wellbeing. *Health & Place*, 60, Article 102225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2019.102225>

² Jeffres, L. W., Bracken, C. C., Jian, G., & Casey, M. F. (2009). The impact of third places on community quality of life. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 4, 333–345. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-009-9084-8>

populations.^{3,4,5,6} Third places provide information about an important community asset correlated with mental wellness.

- [Relevance and Usability] This measure is easily understood and can be used to inform decisions on where funding is needed for community gathering places.
- [Scientific Soundness] This measure of density of third places is simple to calculate and simple to communicate.
- [Feasibility] CBP is an annual series and has included ZIP Code Business Patterns data since 1986. Full release of CBP statistics is available approximately 16 months after each reference year. CBP data are easily accessible for download.

- **Limitations:**

- [Equity] & [Relevance and Usability] This measure does not account for the relative quality and accessibility of third places and relies on the assumption that the presence of more third places is always better for mental well-being. This measure also relies on the assumption that third places will be free of discrimination and social marginalization, which is not always the case.
- [Relevance and Usability] The CBP suppresses data for ZIP codes with fewer than 3 establishments.⁷ As a result, ZIP codes with between 0 to 2 third places cannot be distinguished from each other and all are assigned a density value of zero. As a result, this measure will primarily capture variation in third places density for areas with more third places.

Calculation:

$$\text{Third Places} = \frac{\# \text{ third places}}{\text{population}} \times 100,000 \text{ people}$$

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for third places were initially selected based on a previous study examining closures of third places.⁸ From this starting point, NAICS codes that were associated with addiction (e.g., off-premise alcohol outlets, gambling) or that were based on the physical location of a business that is likely not accessible to the public were removed. Codes were also

³ Rosenbaum, M.S. (2009). Restorative servicescapes: restoring directed attention in third places. *Journal of Service Management*, 20(2), 173-191. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09564230910952762>

⁴ Fujiwara, T., Doi, S., Isumi, A., & Ochi, M. (2020). Association of existence of third places and role model on suicide risk among adolescent in Japan: results from A-CHILD study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.529818>

⁵ Tu, J., Lin, K.-C., & Chen, H.-Y. (2020). Investigating the relationship between the third places and the level of happiness for seniors in Taiwan. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(4), 1172. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17041172>

⁶ Harris, K. M., Edlund, M. J., & Larson, S. L. (2006). Religious involvement and the use of mental health care. *Health Services Research*, 41(2), 395–410. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2006.00500.x>

⁷ United States Census Bureau. (2021, October 8). *County Business Patterns Methodology*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp/technical-documentation/methodology.html>

⁸ Finlay, J., Esposito, M.H., Kim, M., Gomez-Lopez, I.N., & Clarke, P. (2019). Closure of “third places”? Exploring potential consequences for collective health and wellbeing. *Health & Place*, 60, Article 102225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2019.102225>

chosen to avoid double counting any NAICS codes, as codes have a nesting format (subsectors are contained within sectors). As a result, NAICS codes in the following domains were used to identify third places:

- Performing arts companies (Subsector 7111)
- Spectator sports (Subsector 7112)
- Museums, historical sites, and similar institutions (Subsector 712)
- Amusement parks and arcades (Subsector 7131)
- Other amusement and recreation industries (Subsector 7139)
- Civic and social organizations (Subsector 8134)
- Grocery stores (Subsector 4451)
- Specialty food stores (Subsector 4452)
- Mobile food services (Subsector 72233)
- Drinking places (alcoholic beverages) (Subsector 7224)
- Restaurants and other eating places (Subsector 7225)
- Libraries and archives (Subsector 51912)
- All other information services (Subsector 51919)
- Personal care services (Subsector 8121)
- Funeral homes and funeral services (Subsector 81221)
- Cemeteries and crematories (Subsector 81222)
- Coin operated laundries and drycleaners (Subsector 81231)
- Dry cleaning and laundry services (except coin-operated) (Subsector 81232)
- Pet care (except veterinary) services (Subsector 81291)
- Photofinishing (Subsector 81292)
- All other personal services (Subsector 81299)
- Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations (Subsector 813)
- Hobby retail stores (Subsector 451)