

As an upcoming college graduate, I am extremely lucky to have been able to invest in myself to pursue further education to the extent that I have, which has obviously made some extremely enticing opportunities a lot more accessible. Now that “adulting” is a bit more official, real adult things include having responsibilities, paying bills, and making wise decisions that set you up for success in the long term. At the same time, life’s too short to regret any missed opportunities, and sometimes it’s good to have tools and resources to inform you along the way. Thus, as an effort to help me a bit in my apartment search after graduation, I wanted to explore median rent. The [2022 American Community Survey](#) includes a plethora of variables at granular levels across the United States, which was a sweet spot for me. In investigating some of the potential variables I could analyze, I was able to draw a mental map of the things *I* wanted to know - thinks about how walkable a county is, the availability of third places like parks and cafés, homelessness and incarceration, and literacy and numeracy rates. In investigating potential sources that harbor this data, I was able to collect information from [the EPA on walkability](#). I investigated the Department of Housing and Urban Development on [point-in-time estimates of homelessness](#), but data was on a Continuum-of-Care level that required manual inputting of county affiliation, plus the fact that these estimates weren’t mutually exclusive by county. In garnering incarceration data, I drew from Peter Wagner’ and Daniel Kopf’s [Racial Geography of Mass Incarceration](#), although I was concerned with its accuracy given the data was compiled in 2015. To measure literacy and numeracy, the U.S. Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies has county-level data for proficiency in these areas provided by the National Center for Education Statistics. Using R, I compiled this data into a comma-separated list and used Power BI to develop an app to explore these topics.