

THE MENTAL WELLNESS INDEX™

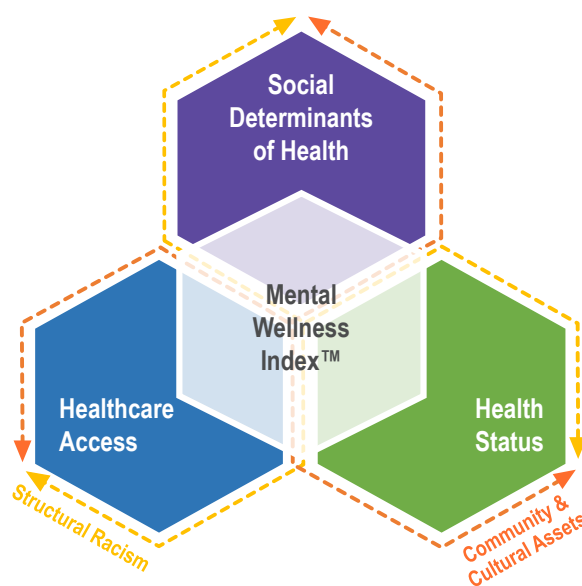
Understanding the factors that influence mental wellness at the community-level

Access the Mental Wellness Index Tool: <https://sjp.mitre.org/mwi>

Mental wellness means everyone in a community can thrive and have the opportunity to flourish, regardless of a mental health or a substance use challenge.¹

The **Mental Wellness Index (MWI)** quantifies and aggregates 28 factors that influence community-level mental wellness into a single numerical ranking at the ZIP code* level for the **entire nation**. These factors act as assets or obstacles to mental wellness and are grouped into three domains in the MWI framework: **social determinants of health, healthcare access, and health status**. The MWI framework acknowledges two dynamic factors that influence mental wellness: **community and cultural assets and structural racism**. These two factors influence each of the measures used to calculate the index.

The MWI is available for **Black populations** (as the initial priority population) and the **overall population** (to enable broad applicability). The MWI was designed with health equity in mind, and recognizes that equity delivered to historically marginalized and underserved populations will accrue to others and potentially catalyzes movement towards social and racial justice. [Learn more about our approach in the MWI Tool under “About the MWI”.](#)



How to Use the MWI

The MWI is designed to **promote data-informed decisions, encourage more equitable allocation of resources** and support decision making **in partnership with communities** (rather than on the behalf of communities). Potential uses include:

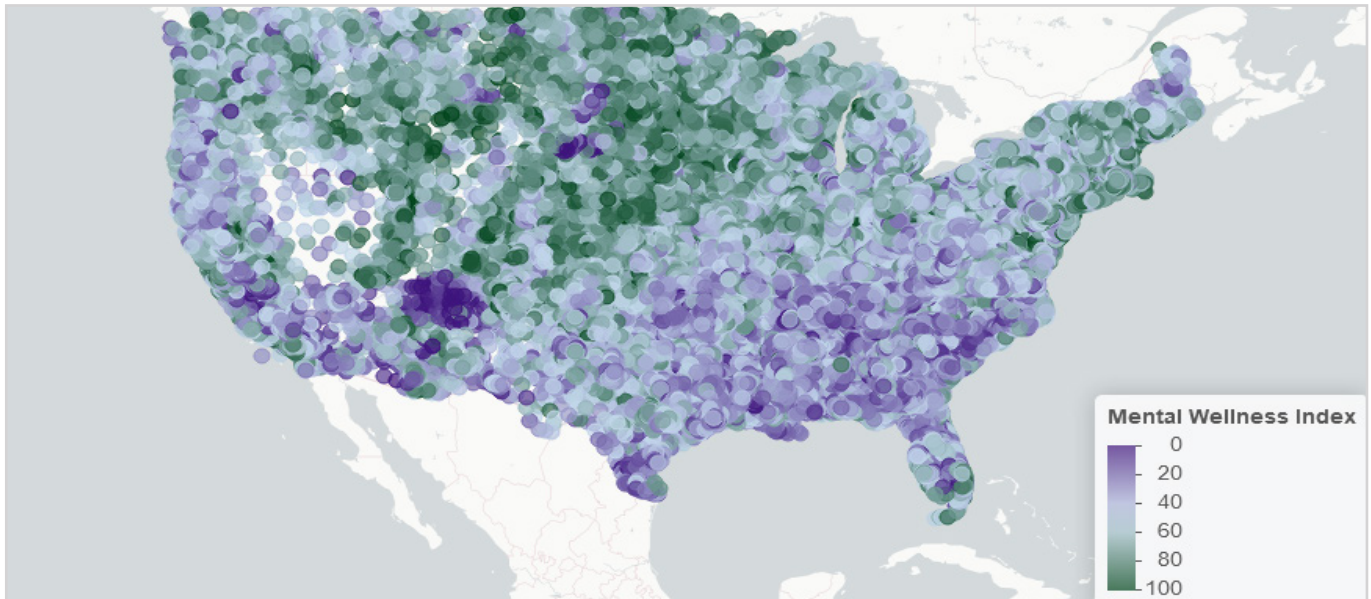
- **Grant Application Support:** The MWI can be used as a tool to support grant applications and provide evidence and data to justify community-level needs.
- **Objective, Data-Based Dashboard:** The MWI provides a standardized way to compare factors contributing to mental wellness across ZIP Codes that can help inform decision makers about where to focus resources.
- **Community-Level Planning:** The MWI's ZIP Code-level focus can help design and direct community-level efforts to address factors related to mental wellness.

¹ National Council for Mental Wellbeing (n.d.) [We Are Mental Wellbeing](#).

² The term “ZIP Code” in this document refers to ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs). For more information on ZCTAs, please see [census.gov](https://www.census.gov) and the About page in the MWI Tool.

THE MENTAL WELLNESS INDEX™

Understanding the factors that influence mental wellness at the community-level



The MWI Tool Has the Following Features



Interactive heat map and distributions displaying variation in overall MWI and individual measures



Community and state-level views designed to accommodate local, state, and national users



Customization and adjustment of measure weights to reflect local experiences and preferences



Incorporation and uploads of community and user-owned data for use alongside national, public data

MWI: An Open-Source Data Tool

The MWI's open-source tool allows users to explore the MWI and its 28 measures through interactive heat maps and distributions by state and ZIP Code. Uniquely, the MWI tool's **Create Your Own MWI feature** allows users to reflect their values of and experiences with the factors that influence mental wellness in their communities, by allowing users to incorporate their own data to create a custom MWI. Because the MWI tool is open-source, the processing and code for the MWI is available to anyone, allowing for complete methodological transparency. For updates and further developments to the MWI, please visit MITRE's [MWI GitHub page](#).

Partnerships and Engagement

MITRE collaborated with, met with, and received and incorporated feedback from community key informants, state and local governments, academics, service providers, and other external funding and technical expert organizations during the development of the MWI.

Contact

For more information about the MWI, please contact the MITRE Social Justice Platform at socialjustice@mitre.org

MITRE's mission-driven teams are dedicated to solving problems for a safer world. Through our public-private partnerships and federally funded R&D centers, we work across government and in partnership with industry to tackle challenges to the safety, stability, and well-being of our nation.