

Selected Household Characteristics for Utah COVID-19 Planning

Overall, Utah's young and generally healthy population is faring well during the COVID-19 crisis. However, according to data from coronavirus.utah.gov, not all Utahns are experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic in the same way. Utah's minority populations represent a disproportionate share of the state's COVID-19 cases. San Juan County, and the Navajo Nation within it, have the second-highest rate of COVID-19 cases in the state.¹

Research compiled by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute in 2018 indicated that 60% of health outcomes are reliant on social, environmental, and behavioral factors.² One resulting significant disparity was overall life expectancy, which ranged by ten years across different Wasatch Front communities.³ The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute recently received a request for information on two household characteristics which could be useful for community plans regarding COVID-19:

- large households, which can make social distancing more complicated, and
- multigenerational households, which might include one or more persons considered vulnerable by CDC standards.

Interestingly, several of the counties that had high shares of households with these characteristics were also identified as some of the least resilient counties in the state if faced with external stresses such as a disease outbreak in analysis conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).⁴

According to the most recent estimates from the American Community Survey, nearly one in five (19.7%) households in Utah has five people or more.⁵ The majority of these households are family households, indicating that at least two members of the household are related; the small portion remaining are non-family households. Utah, Juab, and Morgan Counties have the highest shares of large households. Nine additional counties (Beaver, Box Elder, Davis, Duchesne, Millard, San Juan, Sanpete, Tooele, and Wasatch) have at least 20% of households with five or more people.

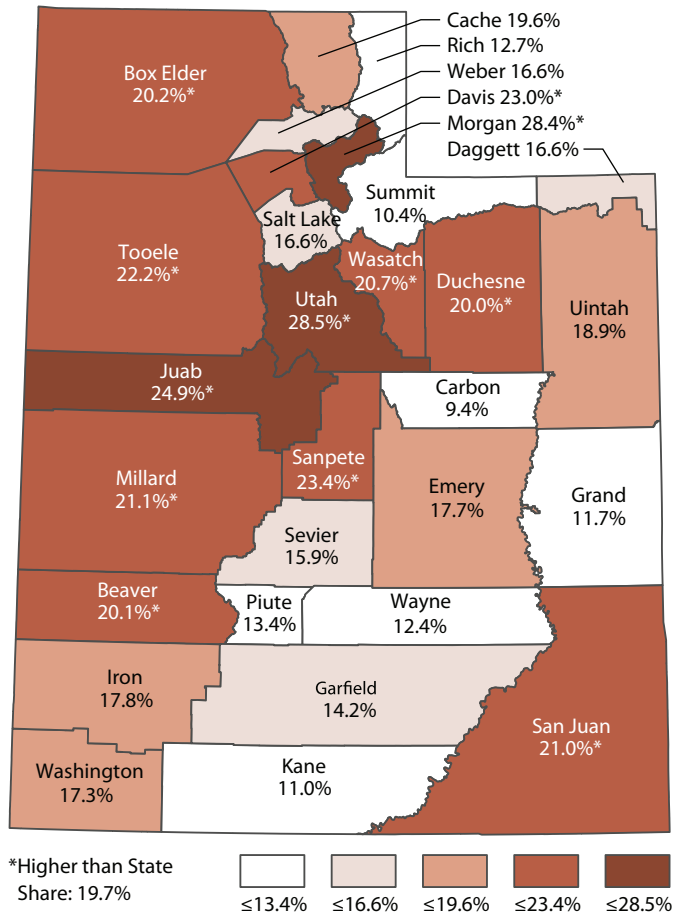
Shares of large households vary across a county's communities, particularly in the most populated counties. Figure 3 maps this variation across Wasatch Front census tracts and identifies the locations of the highest-share tracts in these counties.

Multigenerational households, represented by households with a grandparent living with a grandchild in this analysis, might also have a complicated reality of social distancing. Statewide, 4.2% of households fall within this category. San Juan County has the highest share, with 6.8% of households. Seven additional counties (Carbon, Davis, Duchesne, Salt Lake, Sanpete, Uintah, Utah) have higher than 4.2% of households with an intergenerational family living arrangement.

Three counties, San Juan, Duchesne, and Sanpete, have among the highest shares for the two selected household characteristics and also appear at the top of the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) within the state. The SVI uses data from the American Community Survey to synthesize social determinants of health and provide data-driven insights into the resiliency of communities when stressed. Utah and Salt Lake Counties had high SVI rankings for housing type and transportation. Utah County has high shares for both variables of interest here; Salt Lake County had a high share of multigenerational households, but was lower than average for large households (16.6%). Communities in northwest Salt Lake City, South Salt Lake, West Valley City, Midvale, northwest Orem, southwest Provo, and central Springville had the highest SVI in Salt Lake and Utah counties.⁶

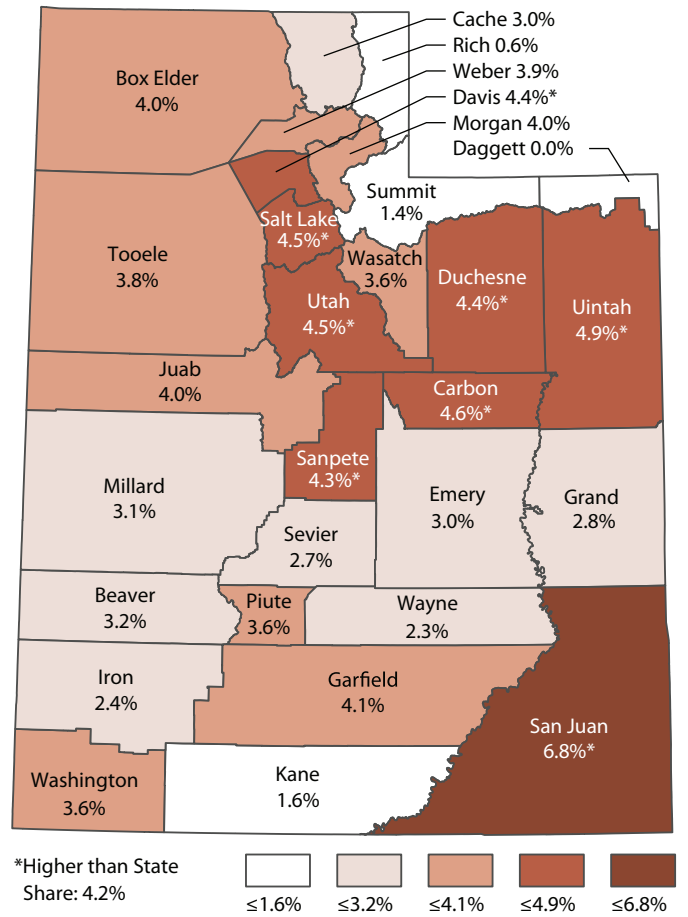
Further detail on all counties is available on request.

Figure 1: Share of Households with Five or More People, Counties



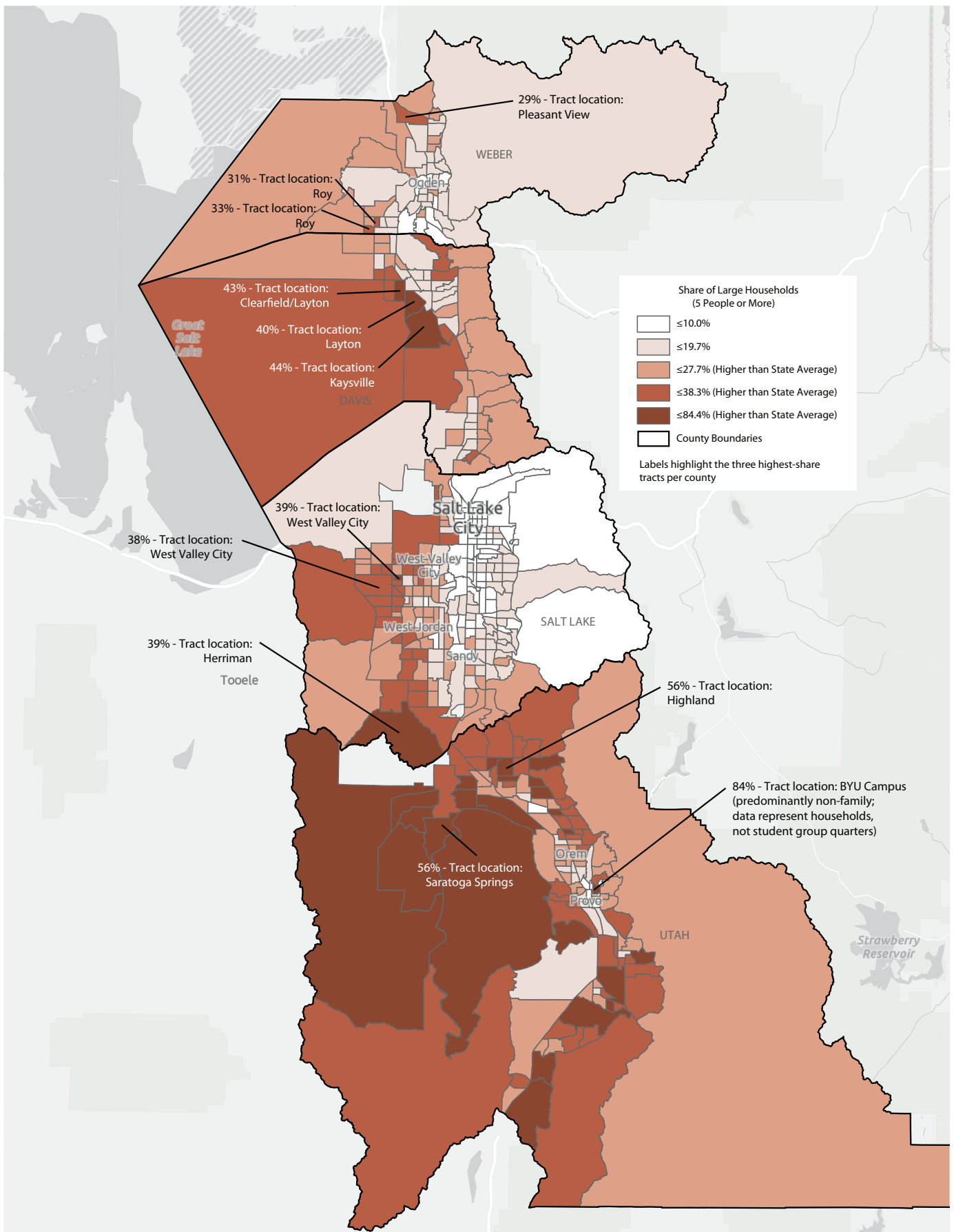
Source: 2014-2018 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Figure 2: Share of Households with Grandparents and Grandchildren Present, Counties



Source: 2014-2018 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Figure 3: Share of Households with Five or More People, Tracts



Source: 2014-2018 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Endnote

1. Coronavirus.utah.gov (2020, May 4).
2. [Summers, L. \(2018\). The Root of the Issue: Utah's Social Determinants of Health, Symposium Proceedings. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute.](#)
3. Summers, L. (2018, August 18). Blog: Utah's Social Determinants of Health: An Economic and Humanitarian Imperative. Retrieved from Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute <https://gardner.utah.edu/blog-utahs-social-determinants-of-health-an-economic-and-humanitarian-imperative/>
4. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. (2020, May 5). CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://svi.cdc.gov/index.html>
5. All data points within this memo come from the 2014-2018 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates unless noted otherwise.
6. Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute analysis of CDC SVI shapefiles, including areas with .75 SVI or higher