

# Building Preparedness Capacity

## Locating Vulnerable & At-Risk Populations in West Virginia

Planning for the local community, specifically those living in West Virginia, begins with the ability to reliably identify and locate those populations to be addressed. This brief highlights the work of the Vulnerable & At-Risk Populations Project at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill’s North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH). In the event of an emergency or incident, individuals who may not be able to equally access or receive planning and preparedness information, resources, and services represent populations at-risk, particularly children, those lacking access to transportation, and individuals with limited English proficiency.



Bluestone Dam – Hinton, WV

### Planning for West Virginia

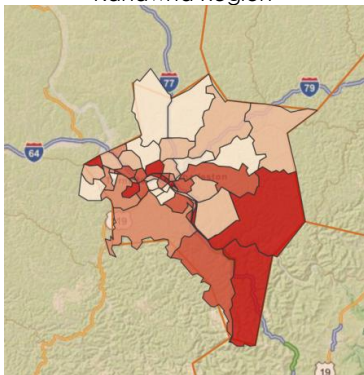
The North Carolina Institute for Public Health (NCIPH) originally developed and introduced the *Vulnerable & At-Risk Populations Resource Guide (Guide)* in North Carolina as a quick online tool to provide a custom list of resources with accompanying jurisdictional maps to aid local health departments (LHDs) in preparedness planning for vulnerable and at-risk populations. In June 2014, NCIPH launched the new *Guide* on a more dynamic, interactive platform on [www.VARPGuide.com](http://www.VARPGuide.com). Unlike other tools, the *Guide* combines a resource database with geographic information to provide a quick and user-friendly tool available for local, state, and tribal planning. The new community-based features allow users to endorse or “like” existing resources, as well as suggest new resources. Based on initial project evaluation findings, the *Guide* addresses the following gaps in practice:

- Decreases the time it takes for LHDs to identify vulnerable and at-risk populations,
- Locates relevant information to assist their planning and preparedness activities, and
- Increases understanding and improve preparedness planning for vulnerable and at-risk populations at the local level.

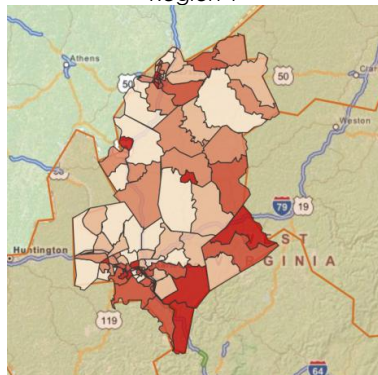
The *Guide* adapts the [CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#) to a more granular geographic level for local use, even by audiences with limited (or no) geographic information system (GIS) experience.

### Adapted Measures for Multi-level Jurisdictional Mapping

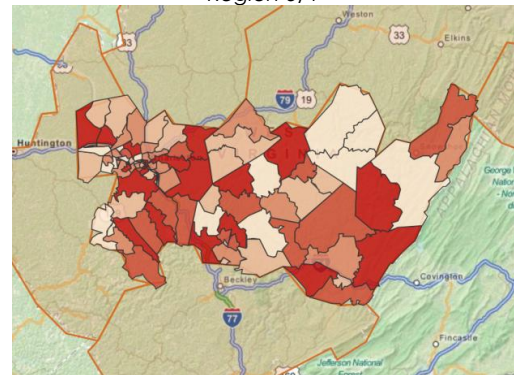
**Public Health District**  
Kanawha Region



**Emergency Management Region**  
Region 1



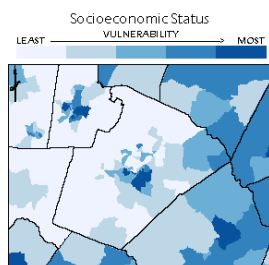
**Hospital EMS**  
Region 3/4



## Measuring Social Vulnerability

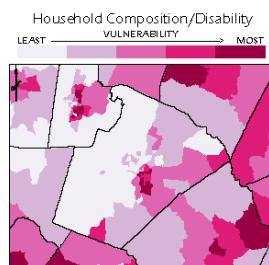
The Vulnerable & At-Risk Populations project team uses a modified version of the [CDC's Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#) to provide local socially and spatially relevant data and information to help public officials and local planners improve prepared planning to respond to emergency events, e.g. severe weather, chemical exposure, and radiological events. The SVI offers data on population concentrations within the jurisdiction, across multiple population groups, including:

### Maps of the Four Domains of the Social Vulnerability Index



**Socioeconomic Status**

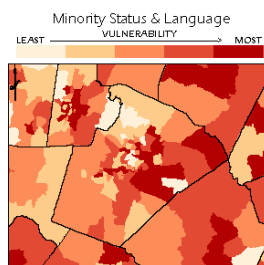
- Percent of individuals below poverty
- Percent unemployed
- Per capita income
- Percent of persons with no high school diploma



**Household Composition**

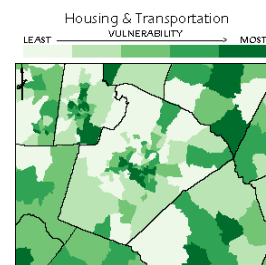
- Percent of persons 65 years of age or older
- Percent of persons 17 years of age or younger
- Percent of persons w/ disability\*
- Percent of single-parent households, w/ children

\* Not available for 2010 U.S. Census



**Minority Status & Language**

- Percent minority
- Percent of persons 5 years of age or older who speak English "less than well"

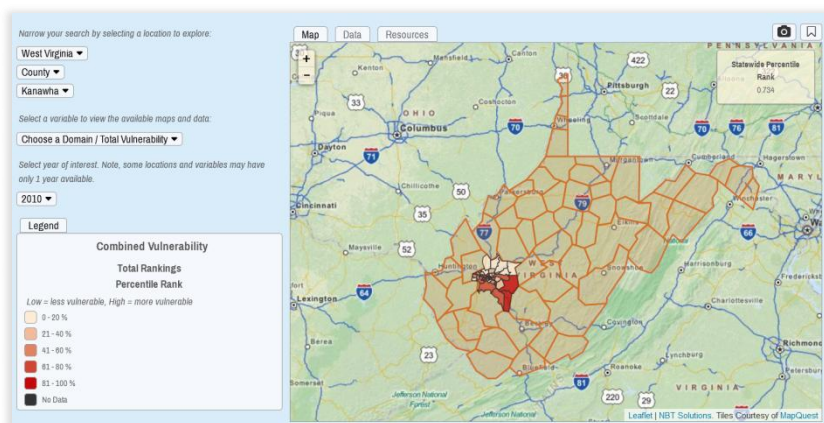


**Housing & Transportation**

- Percent multi-unit structures
- Percent mobile homes
- Crowding
- No vehicle available
- Percent of persons in group quarters

## Accessing the Vulnerable & At-Risk Populations Resource Guide

The *Vulnerable & At-Risk Populations Resource Guide* is available online at [www.VARPguide.com](http://www.VARPguide.com). The site enables you to explore many different kinds of socio-demographic data available, via **Map & Data** page, to view vulnerability across a selected area. To create your map, use the drop down menu to select a location and domain or variable of vulnerability to review.



The site provides ways for users to:

- ➔ Copy and save images onto your computer to share with partners
- ➔ Ability to "bookmark" and save maps and data for later use
- ➔ View and download a table of the data for your jurisdiction by clicking on the **Data** tab located at the top of the map area
- ➔ Upload, share, and endorse resources under **Resources**

The maps and data will help you assess your current state, allow you to determine goals, and help develop plans to address access and functional needs populations in your jurisdiction.

## Acknowledgements

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