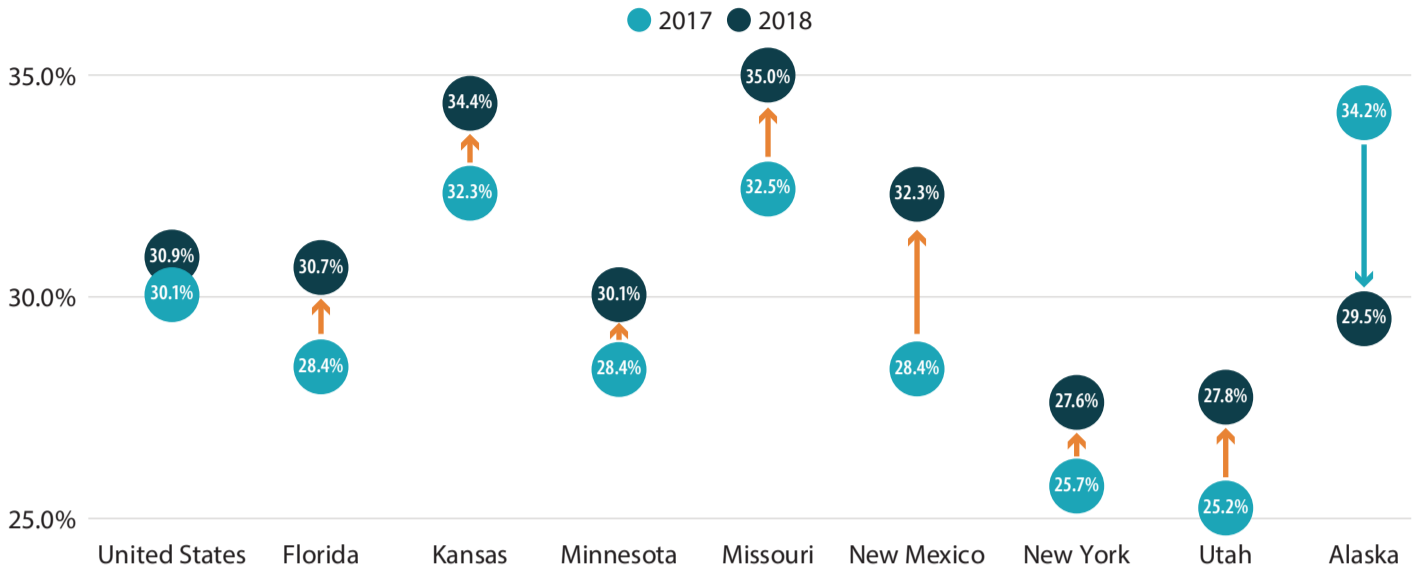Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data Spotlight Series

OBESITY PREVALENCE AMONG ADULTS IN THE UNITED STATES

As the third part of SHADAC's BRFSS data spotlight series, we focus on rates and trends of obesity among adults. For this analysis, "adult obesity" is defined as the civilian non-institutionalized population 18 years and over with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or more. We look at both national and state-level rates at which adult obesity is prevalent, as well as how rates of obesity have changed over time. This data can be found on SHADAC's State Health Compare.
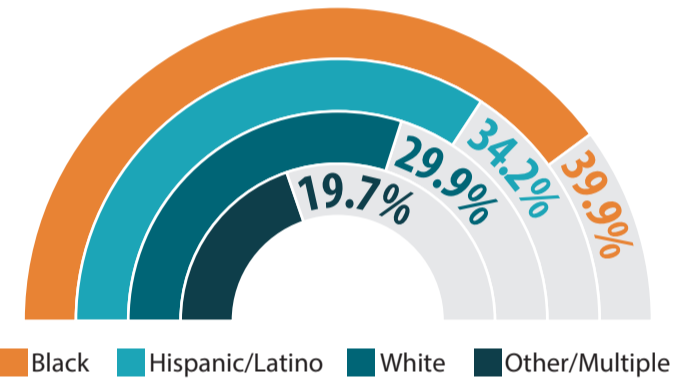
ADULT OBESITY RATES CONTINUE TO RISE IN THE UNITED STATES

The national rate of adult obesity significantly increased for the third year in row, rising by 0.8 percentage points between 2017 and 2018. Seven states experienced significant increases between 2017 and 2018: Florida, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, and Utah; Alaska was the only state that experienced a significant decrease.
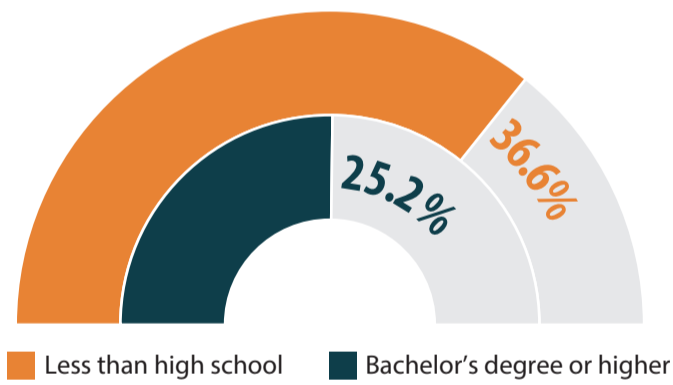
● 2017 ● 2018

State	2017	2018
United States	30.1%	30.9%
Florida	28.4%	30.7%
Kansas	32.3%	34.4%
Minnesota	28.4%	30.1%
Missouri	32.5%	35.0%
New Mexico	28.4%	32.3%
New York	25.7%	27.6%
Utah	25.2%	27.8%
Alaska	34.2%	29.5%

NATIONAL OBESITY RATES, 2018

By Race/Ethnicity

- Black: 39.9%
- Hispanic/Latino: 34.2%
- White: 29.9%
- Other/Multiple: 19.7%

By Educational Attainment

- Less than high school: 36.6%
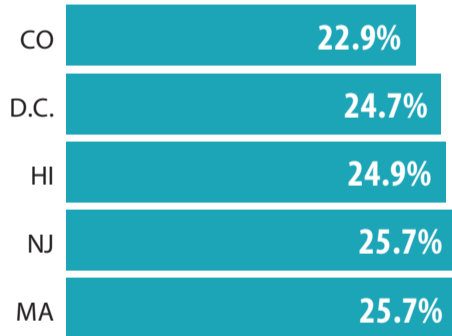- Bachelor's degree or higher: 25.2%

STATE VARIATION IN OBESITY RATES, 2018

Rates of obesity ranged substantially across the states in 2018, from a low of 22.9 percent in Colorado to a high of 39.5 percent in West Virginia and Mississippi. All but three states reported adult obesity rates over 25 percent.

5 states with the HIGHEST obesity rates

State	Rate
WV	39.5%
MS	39.5%
AR	37.1%
LA	36.8%
KY	36.6%

5 states with the LOWEST obesity rates

State	Rate
CO	22.9%
D.C.	24.7%
HI	24.9%
NJ	25.7%
MA	25.7%

STATE VS NATIONAL OBESITY RATES, 2018

In 2018, 21 states reported obesity rates significantly above the national average (30.9%), while 15 states (including D.C.) reported rates significantly below the national average.

▲ Sigificantly ABOVE the national average
▼ Sigificantly BELOW the national average
■ Not significantly different from the national average
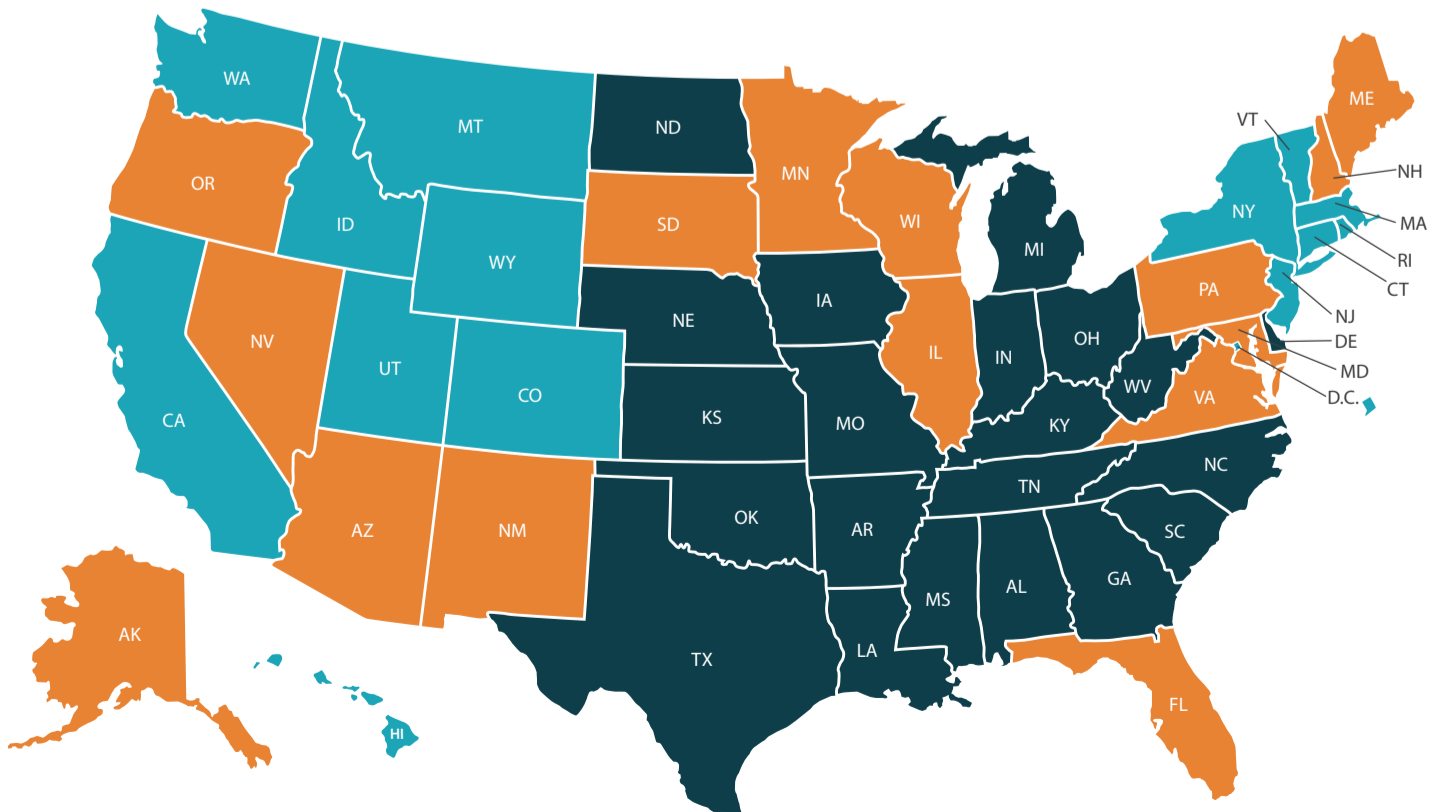
Notes: Adults are defined as the civilian noninstitutionalized population 18 years and over with the exception of the education analysis, where adults are defined as those 25 years and over. All data displayed are statistically significant at the 95% level.
Source: SHADAC analysis of the 2017 and 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) public use files on statehealthcompare.shadac.org

VISIT STATE HEALTH COMPARE TO EXPLORE ADDITIONAL BRFSS MEASURES

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STATE HEALTH ACCESS DATA ASSISTANCE CENTER