Illinois is currently facing a severe budget crisis, outmigration, and declining incomes and quality of life in counties not adjacent to Chicago. This research is intended to assist and ground upcoming tough policy decisions. This presentation therefore compares the major indicators for the 102 Illinois counties in order to assess variations of quality of life in different regions and counties across Illinois. The indicators analyzed are: Population growth, number of jobs, job growth, mortality rates, educational attainment, and poverty rates.

The methodology for this projects includes a comparison of incomes and educational levels, poverty rates, and mortality rates for the 102 counties. To evaluate levels of health and economic well-being, a ratio for mortality rates is calculated, and Gini coefficients are used to assess levels income inequality across and within. The data source for education, as well as income in deciles at the county level is the Census Current Population Survey (Census.gov). Poverty rates are also from Census data, the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE.gov). Data for income and population are from the Bureau of Economic Research (BEA.gov). Preliminary research shows lower incomes in rural and small metro counties, as well as significantly higher mortality rates in rural counties.