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Some Small Counties Could Take Big Economic Hits From the Coronavirus.

How much of a threat does the coronavirus pandemic pose to your community?

While the worst effects have come in major urban regions, such as metropolitan New York and Detroit, some much smaller areas could be at even greater risk, at least economically.

Barron's recently asked HIP Investor, a sustainability ratings, data, and analytics provider, to come up with a vulnerability ranking. The San Francisco-based organization looked at all 3,142 of the nation's counties and equivalents (such as Louisiana's parishes). HIP gave each a score—ranging from 0% (excellent) to 100% (terrible)—that considers factors that help gauge the likelihood of the pandemic striking at the communities, now or in a subsequent wave, and the extent of the possible economic impacts. The study was done before any locked-down state had begun reopening its economy.

The 10 counties that looked safest were in the West and Midwest—Minnesota had five on the list—and, unsurprisingly, have modest populations. The safest larger counties—those with at least 500,000 residents—were in the Northeast, the Midwest, and California.

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Barron's

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