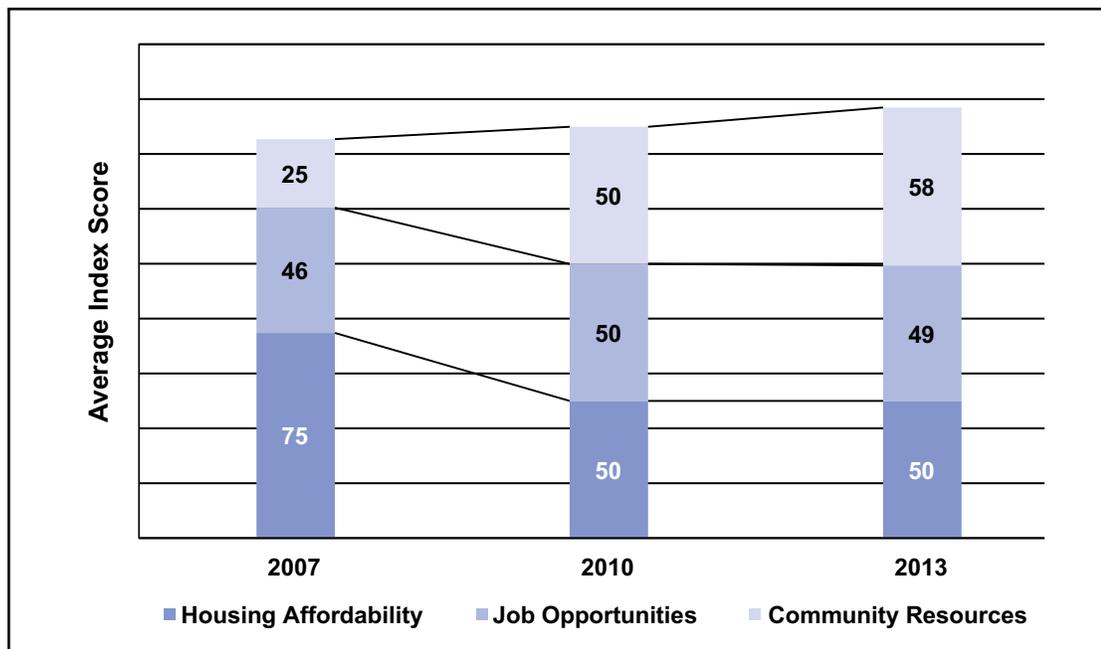


Changes Over Time

The Economic Viability Dashboard enables comparison over time for the three dimensions that it measures. To visualize changes over time, the average scores for all parishes in Louisiana on each index are presented in Figure 30. With 2010 as the baseline for the each Index, the assigned score for each is 50. Scores in 2007 or 2013 that are above 50 show better conditions than in 2010; scores below that level represent worse conditions. In measuring change over time, complete data was not available for 15 (smaller and mostly rural) parishes out of 64.

Figure 30.
Economic Viability Dashboard, Louisiana, 2007 to 2013



“In terms of job opportunities, hurricane recovery jobs fueled by FEMA funds and insurance payouts were not enough to offset the loss of jobs due to hurricane damage and destruction of businesses, as well as the decline in the national economy.”

Source: See Appendix F

The change in Dashboard scores from 2007 to 2013 provides a striking picture of the way Louisiana has started to recover from the 2005 hurricanes as well as the Great Recession. From 2007 to 2010, scores for Housing Affordability fell by 33 percent, while Job Opportunities actually improved by 9 percent and Community Resources doubled. In the three years since the technical end of the Great Recession, Housing Affordability remained flat and Job Opportunities fell by 1 percent while Community Resources continued to improve, increasing by another 15 percent.

What were the key drivers of change? The drop in Housing Affordability reflects the drastic decrease in livable housing stock across the state, as people moved out of areas where houses had been damaged or destroyed to areas with less damage. This movement caused an increase in demand for an already limited housing supply, especially for low-cost rental units. In terms of job opportunities, hurricane recovery jobs fueled by FEMA funds and insurance payouts were not enough to offset the loss of jobs due to hurricane damage and destruction of businesses, as well as the decline in the national economy. The great increase in Community Resources was mainly driven by voter turnout and to a lesser extent by the percent of children enrolled in preschool. Both show the slowing pace of population movement and families becoming more settled and connecting (or reconnecting) with their communities.

“Housing Affordability fell in all but two parishes in Louisiana from 2007 to 2013. The biggest drops were in the parishes surrounding New Orleans, where Housing Affordability fell by more than 45 percent.”

The differences between parishes help highlight the very different situations across the state. Housing Affordability fell in all but two parishes in Louisiana from 2007 to 2013. The biggest drops were in the parishes surrounding New Orleans, where Housing Affordability fell by more than 45 percent. In Orleans Parish in particular, it fell by 100 percent from 2007 to 2013, a clear reflection of hurricane damage. In the parishes surrounding Baton Rouge there was much more variation, reflecting the effect of increased demand on the existing housing stock. The biggest drops were in East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and West Feliciana parishes, where Housing Affordability fell by more than 42 percent. At the same time, there was a 2 percent increase in Iberia and West Baton Rouge parishes.

The changes in Job Opportunities were much more varied across the state, with as many parishes experiencing increases as those experiencing decreases. Most of the improvement in Job Opportunities occurred outside the New Orleans area, but there were big decreases in Job Opportunities in parishes in all regions of the state. In fact, Job Opportunities fell by more than 20 percent in Avoyelles, Jefferson Davis, Livingston, and Union parishes. Many of the increases occurred in the Baton Rouge area, helping to fuel the increased demand for housing. There were also large increases in a few parishes across the state: Job Opportunities improved by more than 100 percent in West Carroll, West Feliciana, and Winn parishes from 2007 to 2013.

Community Resources increased by more than 47 percent in all parishes from 2007 to 2013, and by more than 100 percent in 33 parishes. Interestingly, in general, they increased more in parishes where Job Opportunities improved, again suggesting that the increase was driven by people becoming more stable after the hurricane disruption. For example, Winn Parish had a 200 percent increase in Job Opportunities and a 216 percent increase in Community Resources, and West Feliciana Parish had a 218 percent increase in Job Opportunities and a 237 percent increase in Community Resources.