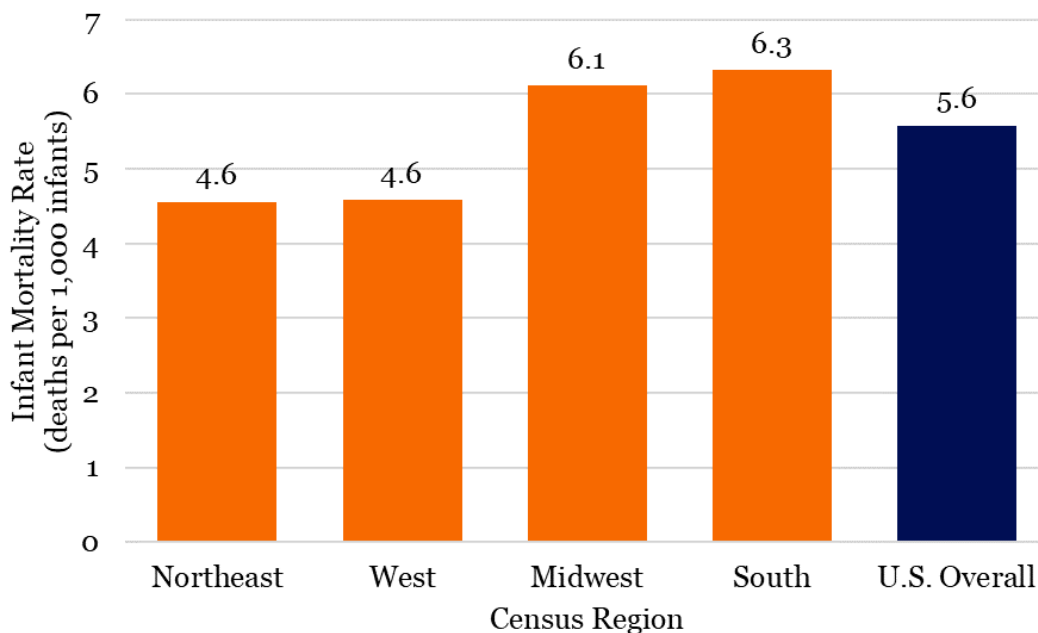


## Infant Mortality Rates Vary Substantially across Regions of the United States

**Marissa Merrifield**

Infant mortality rates are higher in the United States (U.S.) than its high-income [peer countries](#). [For example](#), whereas the infant mortality rate in the U.S. was 5.2 deaths per 1,000 infants in 2021, it was 3.1 in both Australia and Denmark. Additionally, infant mortality rates vary within the U.S., with much higher rates in some geographic regions compared to others. As shown in the figure below, from 2017 to 2021, the overall infant mortality rate in the U.S. was 5.6 deaths per 1,000 infants. Over this period, over 104,000 infants died within their first year of life. The infant mortality rate was the highest in the South (6.3) and lowest in the Northeast and West (4.6). There are several possible explanations for these regional differences including [racial composition](#), socioeconomic status, [educational attainment](#), and policy differences. Given much higher rates in the southern and Midwestern U.S., policymakers should target interventions to these regions.



**Figure 1: Infant Mortality Rates by Census Region, United States, 2017-2021**

Data Source: [CDC WONDER, 2017-2021](#)

Note: Infant mortality represents deaths in the first year of life

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