

REPORT OF THE PROVIDENCE MUNICIPAL REPARATIONS COMMISSION

PREPARED FOR:

Honorable Mayor Jorge O. Elorza
Providence City Council

PREPARED BY:

Providence Municipal Reparations Commission

AUGUST 2022

“YOU SAY YOU HAVE EMANCIPATED US...BUT WHEN YOU TURNED US LOOSE, YOU GAVE US NO ACRES. YOU TURNED US LOOSE TO THE SKY, TO THE STORM, TO THE WHIRLWIND, AND WORST OF ALL, YOU TURNED US LOOSE TO THE WRATH OF OUR INFURIATED MASTERS.”

— FREDERICK DOUGLASS



MAYOR JORGE O. ELORZA
CITY OF PROVIDENCE



PROVIDENCE
CITY COUNCIL



Truth
**RECONCILIATION
REPARATIONS**
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

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CLOSING THE PRESENT-DAY RACIAL WEALTH AND EQUITY GAP

PROVIDENCE MUNICIPAL REPARATIONS OVERVIEW

SUMMARY

In July 2020, Providence launched a three-phase process to advance Truth-telling, Reconciliations and Reparations for African heritage and Indigenous residents. Mayor Elorza launched the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission to address the injuries outlined in the Truth Telling and Reconciliation phases and provide recommendations to the City on appropriate policies, programs, and projects to begin repairing harm.

The City has allocated \$10 million of American Rescue Plan funds to advance this work.

The Municipal Reparations Commission partnered with the Truth-Telling and Reconciliations Subgroup and City of Providence staff to engage residents before making recommendations to the City of Providence to advance reparations.

TOTAL ARPA ALLOCATION: \$10,000,000

INFORMING THIS REPORT

Historical documentation provided by Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, Rhode Island Historical Society, 1696 Heritage Group, and the Providence Preservation Society

650+ primary and secondary sources of documentation and historical narratives

378 survey responses

1,500 Providence stakeholders engaged during Reconciliation efforts

29 interviews

11 events

REPARATIONS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FACTS

7 Reparations Town Hall Meetings

17 hybrid meetings

25+ organizations participated

30+ Reparations Commission public comments

750+ A Matter of Truth reports disseminated

58 Town Hall attendees

1. INTRODUCTION

Racial disparities in economic well-being can be traced to the very founding of the United States of America. The City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island were settled through the founding enterprises of Indigenous people's land and enslaved African people's labor. Colonizers paid little or nothing for native land and paid no wages for enslaved African labor that produced the products and services that created enormous wealth and prosperity.

Systematic racism, a form of race-based discrimination embedded as a normal practice within a society and its governmental system, has a long history in the United States, and cities like Providence approved discriminatory and dehumanizing laws and policies that created and exacerbated inequality in almost every sphere of life.

During the 20th century, race-based discrimination continued as municipal, state, and federal government-sanctioned redlining, discriminatory employment and housing practices, urban renewal, and interstate highway improvements deconstructed largely African heritage and limited-income neighborhoods including Fox Point, Upper South Providence, West Elmwood, College Hill and Lippitt Hill.

Mayor Elorza tasked the **Municipal Reparations Commission** ("the Commission") with addressing the information outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation phases of Mayor Elorza's **Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Community-driven Executive Order** and providing "clear recommendations to the City on appropriate policies, programs, and projects to begin repairing harm." This report provides recommendations for reparative action that are anchored in extensive socio-economic research, community engagement, and policy deliberations.

In documenting these truths, this report, informed by the work of the Commission, aims to build an understanding of how the City of Providence's treatment of nonwhite people evolved, which people and institutions benefited, who was left behind, and how these legacies still influence society today. The findings, which document and validate the struggle of African heritage, Indigenous and people of limited means to thrive in the City of Providence, will help to create an environment and future policy platforms for positive change that foster fairness, equity, and justice for all residents.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Providence Municipal Reparations Commission is grateful to the Honorable Mayor Jorge O. Elorza for launching and leading the Municipal Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations effort that led to the creation of the Commission and the completion of this report; to Council President John J. Iglizoi and members of the Providence City Council for their support and Commission appointments; and to the City of Providence African American Ambassador Group (AAAG), who have *“envisioned a future where racial, social, and economic equity is achieved for African Americans in Providence, and where our government and institutions represent and empower the African American community,”* for their ongoing vision and leadership on behalf of the greater Providence community. We are also appreciative of the many dedicated residents of the Providence community who took the time to attend community engagement meetings, attend Commission meetings and most importantly, contribute their comments, ideas, and proposals to advance the work of the Commission.

We also want to recognize the many City of Providence staff members who contributed their time, energy, and expertise in

support of the Commission’s work and to this report. This work would not have been possible without the invaluable staff members who contributed to the work of the Commission and the completion of this report, including Theresa Agonia, LaJuan Allen, Elizabeth Anusaukas, Shawndell Burney-Speaks, Dana Gillson, Bret Jacob, Patrice Jean-Philippe, Hannah Kahn, Quintin Nard, Monsurat Ottun, Diana Perdomo, Silas Pinto, and Keith Stokes. We also thank Kennedy M. Shannon, Esq. and iParametrics for their dataset contributions related to American Rescue Plan funding. We are truly grateful to all who helped us research, draft, and complete this important report.

Lastly, we recognize the 13 members of our Commission, for each contributing their expertise, time, and knowledge to this process. Collectively, Commissioners have over 400 years of combined experience either living or working in the City of Providence which is important to note when considering recommendations within this report. This work is challenging, but Commissioners showed up week after week because of the important impact this work will have on our community.



Commission members appointed by Mayor Elorza include:



Chairperson
Rodney Davis



Vice-Chairperson
Arnell Millhouse



Lanre Ajakaiye



Jessica Brown



Wanda Brown



Jim Vincent



Raymond "Two
Hawks" Watson

Commission members appointed by the Providence City Council include:



Kyle Bennett



Michael Costa



Phyllis Evans



Dewayne Hackney



Dwayne Keys



Cristian Potter

3. GLOSSARY TO AID IN READING THE REPORT

This glossary of terms is intended to provide the reader with brief definitions of some of the terms, concepts, and other expressions used in the “A Matter of Truth” report and subsequent components of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations process. Understanding these terms has assisted the Commission to more clearly follow the four centuries of history of evolving languages, phrases, and interpretations, while also directly assisting in aligning past practices outlined in the “A Matter of Truth” report with present day remedies.

GLOSSARY TERMS

African Diaspora:

The African Diaspora is the worldwide collection of communities descended from native Africans or people from Africa, predominantly in the Americas. The term most commonly refers to the descendants of the West and Central Africans who were enslaved and shipped to the Americas via the Atlantic slave trade between the 16th and 19th centuries, with their largest populations in the United States, Brazil, and the West Indies.

African Heritage:

Belonging to an ethnic group consisting of people with partial or total ancestry originating from sub-Saharan Africa. Today, the city’s African heritage residents include African American, Indigenous, African, Bi-racial, Afro-Latino, Cape Verdean, and Afro-Caribbean.

Anti-Racism:

Anti-Racism encompasses a range of ideas and political actions which are meant to counter racial prejudice, systemic racism, and the oppression of specific racial groups.

Civil Rights:

Equal social opportunities and equal protection under the law, regardless of race, religion, or other personal characteristics.

Detribalization:

Detribalization is the process by which persons who belong to a particular Indigenous ethnic identity or community are detached from that identity or community through the deliberate efforts of colonizers and/or the larger effects of colonialism.

Equal Opportunity:

The policy of treating people without discrimination, especially on the basis of their sex, race, or age.

Equity:

Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Fair Employment:

The employment of workers on a basis of equality without discrimination or segregation especially because of race, color, or creed.

Fair Housing:

The law that makes illegal any discrimination in the sale, lease, or rental of housing, or making housing otherwise unavailable, because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.

Federal Housing Administration:

The National Housing Act of 1934 established the Federal Housing Administration to make housing and home mortgages more affordable.

Hardscrabble/Snowtown:

Hard Scrabble (Addison Hollow) and Snowtown were two African heritage neighborhoods located in Providence in the early nineteenth century. They were also the sites of race riots which destroyed multiple black homes and displaced many families in 1824 and 1831, respectively.

Indentured Service:

Indentured servitude is a form of labor in which a person is contracted to work without salary for a specific number of years.

Indigenous People:

People who inhabited a country or a geographical region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived. The new arrivals later became dominant through conquest, occupation, settlement, or other means.

Inheritable Slavery:

A child born to an enslaved mother inherits her slave status for life. Widely adopted for African enslavement in the Americas and West Indies.

Jim Crow Laws:

Jim Crow laws were state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation largely perpetrated upon African heritage people, starting after the Civil War, and continuing well into the 20th century.

Model Cities:

The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (Model Cities) was enacted as a broad urban planning program meant to revitalize cities and improve the welfare of people living in slums and blighted neighborhoods.

Negro Blood & One Drop Rule:

“Negro Blood” is a pseudo-science popularly referred to as the “One-Drop Rule,” that employs a highly subjective and discriminatory legal principle of racial classification that asserts that any person with even one African heritage ancestor is considered Black or colored. This highly-racialized tactic of defining non-white people effectively denied Narragansett tribal members of their legal rights to their ancestral land and identity in 19th century Rhode Island.

Negro Cloth:

“Negro Cloth” was cheap but strong coarse cloth used in making clothes for slaves in the American South. During the early 19th century, Rhode Island textile manufacturers specialized in Negro cloth production. At least 84 Rhode Island mills produced the material during that era, the highest concentration in New England.

Overcriminalization:

The act of imposing unbalanced penalties with no relation to the gravity of the offense committed or the culpability of the wrongdoer. In many cases, overcriminalization is related to over-policing in marginalized communities.

Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs) & Neighborhoods:

Under the final U.S. Treasury American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) rule, “recipients were allowed to presume that families residing in QCTs or receiving services provided by Tribal governments were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.” Providence QCTs include but are not limited to Upper and Lower South Providence, Washington Park, Mount Hope (Lippitt Hill), Olneyville, Fox Point, Hartford, Elmwood, and Smith Hill.

Racial Wealth Gap:

Racial Wealth Gap refers to the difference in assets owned by different racial or ethnic groups, this gap results from a range of economic factors that affect the overall economic well-being of these different groups.

Redlining:

Redlining is the highly discriminatory practice that restricts or denies access to loans, mortgages, and other financial resources based on race, class, and location.

Reparations:

As defined by the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission as closing the racial wealth and equity gap between Providence residents and neighborhoods.

Residents Facing Poverty:

Providence residents/households earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) that are considered to be very low-income, and residents/households earning less than 30% of AMI who are considered to be extremely low-income households.

Triangle Trade:

Europeans traded manufactured goods for captured Africans, who were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to become enslaved in the West Indies and Americas.

Tribal Sovereignty:

The inherent authority of indigenous people and tribes to govern themselves.

Urban Renewal:

The publicly-sanctioned process of seizing and demolishing large swaths of private and public property for the purpose of modernizing and improving blighted infrastructure.

Warning Out Laws:

Municipal “warning-out” laws were enacted to determine who was a lawful inhabitant of a town and who the town would officially decide was a candidate for expulsion.



4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Providence's effort leading to both the formation of the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission and its final report and recommendations had its beginnings in the spring of 2020. Mayor Elorza formed the African American Ambassador Group (AAAG) in May 2020 to launch an active dialogue with the city's African heritage community on the devastating health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Comprised of dozens of residents and Providence stakeholders from across different backgrounds and generations, the group quickly evolved to meet weekly and discuss and advance a more comprehensive social justice agenda for the City of Providence. Defined by the group members, the AAAG's vision is to *"protect, uplift, celebrate, and empower the African American community in Providence by developing and advancing City of Providence policies that dismantle oppressive systems and extinguish racial, social, and economic equity gaps for African Americans."*

The immediate and impactful work of the AAAG includes a community-driven Executive Order removing the term "plantations" from all City documents and oath ceremonies and a community-driven Executive Order declaring Juneteenth a City holiday to recognize the emancipation of slavery and honor the history, perseverance, and achievements of African Americans.

In addition, on July 15, 2020, Mayor Elorza signed an Executive Order that identified and created a process of **Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations** to address institutional and systemic bias and racism affecting individuals of African heritage, Indigenous people, and other people of color within the City of

Providence. The three-phased process began with research to advise future components of the Executive Order.

The Truth process was realized through a comprehensive research effort led by the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society in collaboration with a number of city and state historical institutions, collecting over 650 primary and secondary sources of documentation and historical narratives that revealed 400 years of Providence and Rhode Island history. The final report, paid for through private funding, entitled, "A Matter of Truth: The Struggle for African Heritage and Indigenous People Equal Rights in Providence, Rhode Island (1620-2020)," provided the evidentiary documentation of the institutions of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous people, and the ongoing racialized discrimination that resonates to the present day in Providence. Over 750 copies of the report have been widely distributed across the city and state and the report has been used as a learning tool by civic, business, and educational institutions. The report's basic findings of fact were based upon the premise:

"Racial disparities in economic well-being can be traced to the founding of the United States. The City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island were settled through the founding enterprises of Indigenous people land and African people labor. Colonizers paid little or nothing for native land and paid no wages for enslaved African labor that produced the products and services that created enormous wealth and prosperity for certain persons, families, businesses, and institutions."

The findings of the “A Matter of Truth” report were used to initiate the process of Reconciliation. To advance this work, the City unveiled a Request for Proposals after receiving a \$100,000 grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Through this process, the City secured the services of the Providence Cultural Equity Initiative, Roger Williams University, and Providence Public Library to design and launch a framework for reconciliation, which included several months of community engagement, reflecting on the information discovered and the research compiled within the “A Matter of Truth” report. The Coalition of partners worked with the AAAG Truth-Telling and Reconciliation Subgroup, composed of nearly 20 community members from the larger African American Ambassador Group.

On February 28, 2022, the Framework for Reconciliation was publicly unveiled. It was piloted in the neighborhoods of Fox Point, Lippitt Hill, Upper South Providence, and West Elmwood, and outlines a model and proof of concept to continue reconciliation in perpetuity. The process also included the development of a multimedia initiative to directly connect more individuals with the “A Matter of Truth” report, including a website featuring documentary interviews and the reconciliation framework report.

The final outcome of the Truth and Reconciliation process is the completion of this report by the appointed Providence Municipal Reparations Commission members, who have worked tirelessly over weekly public meetings to provide recommendations for specific program, policy, and legislative remedies to address socio-economic harms as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation phases. The recommendations are bold, innovative,

and most importantly, provide measurable outcomes for reparations to **“close the present-day racial wealth and equity gap”** that has left too many African heritage, Indigenous and other residents of Providence much poorer than their white counterparts. Informed by a robust community engagement process, the Commission has outlined the Providence **11-Point Municipal Reparations Investment Plan**, reparative justice recommendations that take a broad view of Providence history and consequences and translate them into a series of programs and policies that can bring immediate opportunity and equity for those Providence residents of greatest need. Areas of focus and investment include equity building, criminal justice reform, neighborhood development, health equity, and the advancement of educational and cultural opportunities. These investment strategies are discussed at greater length in the sections that follow.

The report concludes with an important section entitled Moving Forward Together, which advances a path for historically complicit institutions and those who look to join the City’s efforts to invest in equity and opportunity for all residents of Providence. The final section also includes an important recommendation for advancing national reparations efforts through the inclusion of “racial equity” as part of a national objective for federal funding priorities. This action would codify racial equity alongside the present federal investment priorities that benefit low and moderate-income persons and prevent or eliminate slums or blight.

Doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way is a great challenge that has been central to the work of the Commission and is embodied in this report.

5. PROVIDENCE MUNICIPAL REPARATIONS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The work of the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission is driven by community-driven components of the Truth, Reconciliations and Reparations process, established in July 2020. For ease of the reader, summaries on each piece of this process are included after our recommendations.

DEFINING REPARATIONS: CLOSING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP IN PROVIDENCE

As documented within the “A Matter of Truth” report, beginning with the taking of Indigenous lands and the enslavement of African heritage people in early Providence, the system of racial discrimination deprived early people of color the value of their own land and labor, setting the stage for a persistent multigenerational “Racial Wealth and Equity Gap” that continues to disadvantage descendants today. Continuing through the 20th century, legally sanctioned redlining, discriminatory employment and housing practices, urban renewal and interstate highway improvements ghettoized and later deconstructed largely African heritage and limited-income neighborhoods including Fox Point, Upper South Providence, West Elmwood, College Hill, and Lippitt Hill. These actions would continue to extend income disparities between white and Providence residents of color to the present day. It has become the central findings of fact by our Commission that the racial wealth and equity gap for African heritage, Indigenous, and people of color are the underpinnings of contemporary income disparities in Providence.

A racial wealth and equity gap refers to the income disparity in the assets of typical

households across race, ethnicity, and class. Many studies have confirmed that racial wealth and equity gaps between the wealth of white families and people of color is a persistent socio-economic challenge across America. As part of our Commission’s assessment of the racial wealth and equity gaps within the City of Providence, findings revealed that Providence has the greatest overall income inequality of any other city in the State of Rhode Island and one of the highest nationwide. While the national wealth and equity gap between white and people of color is so significant, and it will require remedy through a wide-ranging federal reparations initiative, the City of Providence can immediately address the issue through targeted programs that begin to close the income disparities between residents. In practice, closing the racial wealth and equity gap in Providence would be a long overdue investment in people and neighborhoods who were methodically denied over generations the chance to build and retain wealth simply because of their race and ethnicity.

An important part of the work of the Commission was to not only to define “Reparations” as closing the racial wealth and equity gap between Providence residents and neighborhoods, but to recommend municipal investment avenues that can help residents of need get started on the path to income security and stability. The Commission’s 11-Point Municipal Reparations Investment Plan encourages the city to design programs and policies that encourage entrepreneurship, financial literacy, homeownership, education, and employment training which will directly enable eligible residents the opportunity to create a good quality of life for themselves and future generations of Providence residents.

PARAMETERS FOR ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Centuries of racial discrimination and exploitation have left a majority of African heritage and Indigenous residents of Providence much poorer than their white counterparts. Today's racial wealth gap is the product of centuries of public policies and practices that continue to keep non-white residents of Providence from getting ahead.

Decades of discriminatory policies and practices also created the preconditions that make many African heritage and Indigenous peoples and other historically marginalized residents more vulnerable to COVID-19 inequities today. Substantial changes to these laws and policies did not occur until the late 1960s, and the harm continues to exist.

As further defined within ARPA final rule, recipients of this funding "were allowed to presume that families residing in QCTs or receiving services provided by Tribal governments were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and too many citizens and residents of the United States remain unemployed, out of the labor force, or unable to pay their bills, with this pain particularly acute among lower-income and communities of color".

ELIGIBILITY DEFINITIONS

The Commission undertook significant deliberations to develop an eligibility policy that reflected both the history of racialized discrimination within the City of Providence dating back to nearly four centuries, and also the on-going effects still influencing the present day. While noting this history of discrimination began with Indigenous land-taking and African enslavement,

it soon evolved into newer forms of intolerance that were constantly placed upon non-white residents.

The eligibility definitions also recognize residents who may not have been harmed by early injustices to Indigenous inhabitants and enslaved Africans, but were injured by the lingering legacy of disenfranchisement and enslavement due to their Indigenous and African heritage once they arrived to the city in later years. In recognizing these irrefutable demographic facts, the Commission adopted four eligibility categories for recommended reparations investments that would most accurately reflect the City of Providence's unique history and also respond to the residents in the present day with the most measurable need.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE – People who are a part of social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties before the European settlement of Providence and Rhode Island, including the natural resources where they live, inhabit, or from which they have been displaced.

AFRICAN HERITAGE PEOPLE – An ethnic group consisting of people with ancestry originating from sub-Saharan Africa. Today, the city's African heritage residents include, but are not limited to, African American, African, Bi-racial, Afro-Latino, Cape Verdean, and Afro-Caribbean.

QUALIFIED CENSUS TRACTS & NEIGHBORHOODS – *Under the final U.S. Treasury ARPA rule, recipients of funding "were allowed to presume that families residing in Qualified Census Tracts (QCT) or receiving services provided by Tribal governments were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic."* Providence QCTs eligible for these programs include Upper and Lower South Providence,

Washington Park, Mount Hope (Lippitt Hill), Olneyville, Fox Point, Hartford, Elmwood, Smith Hill, Wanskuck, and Manton.

RESIDENTS FACING POVERTY –

Providence residents/households earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income that are considered to be very low-income. Preference given to residents/households earning less than 30% of AMI who are considered to be extremely low-income households. Individuals who are eligible for programming include:

- Residents who were born in the City of Providence or,
- Non-College students who have lived in Providence, Rhode Island for a minimum of three (3) years or,
- For people who moved to Providence to attend a college or university, three (3) years from the last date of enrollment.

PROVIDENCE MUNICIPAL REPARATIONS 11- POINT INVESTMENT PLAN

In order to redress the legacy of Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations for the City of Providence, the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission makes the following calls to action in the form of an 11-Point Investment Plan. Each recommendation includes a summary of key components that represent policies and programs for implementation consideration by the City Administration, City Council, and external partners.

1 – RECOGNITION OF HARM

Harm to a person, community, and a people can come in many forms, such as psychological harm, physical harm, legal harm, social harm, and economic harm. While many see the harm done to Indigenous and people of African Heritage in Providence as being long past history, the legacy exists and persists today deeply embedded in social, political, and business systems. The first step in recognizing the harm of racialized discrimination is through official apologies and acknowledgements, and it is a necessary prerequisite to advance public discussions about what it means to justly undo the harm. The Commission recommends the following initiatives:

- Formal Municipal Apology For African Enslavement
- Formal Municipal Indigenous Land Acknowledgement
- Formal Municipal Apology For Urban Renewal Policies and Practices
- Formal Municipal Acknowledgment of the harms to African Heritage and Indigenous communities caused by over criminalization and enforcement of low-level drug offenses
- Formal Recognition for People from African Heritage and Indigenous Communities with Respect to Public Art or Buildings (i.e. reimagining building names, public streets, monuments, and public spaces)
- Official City Holiday in Honor of the 1936 Indian Day Act

2 – EQUITY BUILDING FOR AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Commission recognizes that a well-documented legacy of racialized discrimination in the City of Providence has created persistent multigenerational racial wealth and equity disparities for too many residents. To advance measurable equity and opportunity, the Commission recommends several programs that simultaneously build wealth and financial stability among eligible residents of the city.

- Home Ownership and Financial Literacy Program
- Home Repair Fund
- Capacity Investments in African Heritage and Indigenous Community Organizations
- Earn & Learn Workforce Training
- African Heritage and Indigenous Business Acceleration
- Expansion of the Guaranteed Income Program
- Expansion of Youth Internship Programs for African Heritage and Indigenous Youth
- Lead By Example: Expansion of African Heritage and Indigenous municipal employment at all levels to reflect the demographic of the City
- Establish a legal defense fund for African Heritage and Indigenous Peoples facing rental evictions



3 – CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION COMPANIES

The Commission recognizes a racially and culturally diverse media market can create a space where African heritage, Indigenous and other residents of color can speak for themselves about issues of importance, celebrate their cultural values, and provide an invaluable platform for sharing information most relevant to their communities. The Commission recommends the following strategies to increase media presence within the Providence community.

- Invest in and develop African heritage and Indigenous-owned media firms, (i.e. radio, podcast, television, digital platforms, broadband-access, etc.)
- Partner with the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters and their Foundation to bring best business practices to Providence.

4 – CREATION OF AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

As painfully documented by most research, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted African heritage, Indigenous, and other communities of color within the City of Providence. The Commission recognizes that nonprofit organizations led by people of color play a vital role by providing goods, services, employment opportunities, and other forms of support to the communities they serve. Although neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations are often at the frontline of a crisis, they are also deeply impacted by the economic hardship that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Commission recommends several direct investment strategies to expand the capacity of community-based organizations to deliver needed development programs.

- Support programming in the City of Providence that promotes community health, youth engagement, safe neighborhoods, and criminal justice reform.
- Provide grants to expand operational capacity of African heritage and Indigenous organizations and businesses.
- Invest in programs that preserve, safeguard, promote, and cultivate the culture and heritage of African heritage and Indigenous peoples by African Heritage and Indigenous peoples.

5 – REVIEW AND REFORMATION OF LAWS AND POLICIES THAT HARM AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Systematic discrimination—a discriminatory act or set of actions that becomes embedded in a society—is the challenge that people of color generally, and Indigenous and people of African heritage specifically, have faced since the earliest days of Providence. The Commission recommends innovative policies and procedures that prevent mass incarceration and overcriminalization at the “front end” of the criminal justice system.

- Establish and invest in a right to counsel program to ensure that African Heritage and Indigenous people have access to effective legal assistance at any point of contact with the legal system.
- Establish a Bail Bond Fund to reduce unjust Pretrial Detention for African Heritage and Indigenous people.
- Decriminalize the Providence municipal code, including *Section 16-3. - Disorderly and indecent conduct, and Section 23-32. - Consumption of alcoholic beverages on any public street, sidewalk, way, or grounds owned by the city or on licensed parking lots or land.*
- Codify a Fair Chance Hiring policy into City ordinance to ensure applicants of African and Indigenous Heritage with prior criminal convictions are evaluated for employment holistically.
- In accordance with P.L. 1936, Ch. 2331 Sec. 1 of the RI General Laws, waive all municipal fees associated with Tribal events held in public spaces in the City.
- Discontinue the practice of suspending driver’s licenses for unpaid municipal fines and fees for African Heritage and Indigenous people.

- Discharge all municipal court debt for African Heritage and Indigenous people one year old or greater as of the issuance of this report and continue annual discharge until systemic reforms to increase accessibility to and engagement with municipal court are enacted.
- Increase the accessibility of people of African and Indigenous Heritage to, and engagement with, municipal court, including but not limited to:
 - Offering sessions at varying hours to accommodate nontraditional work and childcare schedules.
 - Allowing for video conference hearings, text and email reminders about tickets and court dates, and online service options to facilitate easier communication with the court.
 - Creating an online system that enables residents to search for and pay their violation using criteria other than ticket/notice number.
 - Creating an online system that enables residents to contest municipal violations.
 - Establishing a standardized process that calculates a defendant's ability to pay if they choose to contest a municipal violation and/or request a discharge.
- Discontinue the Providence Police Department's (PPD) use of no-knock warrants.
- Provide the Providence External Review Authority (PERA) with adequate resources to provide effective oversight of the PPD and enforcement of the *Community Safety Act*, including but not limited to:
 - A budget reflective of staffing needs
 - ▶ Proactive community engagement and community building from the PPD and PERA based on best practices and standards.
 - ▶ Quarterly reports regarding community engagement efforts.
 - Implementation of a City of Providence residency requirement policy for PERA board members. Implementation of personal and professional standards for qualification to serve on the Board.

6 – MOVEMENT TOWARDS A MORE EQUITABLE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FOR AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

One of the greatest challenges of the healthcare system is to provide equal quality care to all regardless of race, age, gender, ethnicity, and income. This becomes even more evident when considering the devastating health and social impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated within the Providence community and neighborhoods of color. The Commission recommends the following investments in closing the racial wealth and equity gaps in Providence.

- Expansion of mental and behavioral health and wellness supports for Indigenous and African Heritage Peoples, neighborhoods and communities.
- Expansion of Mental Health providers and adequate engagement with local schools.
- Collaborate with the Providence Healthy Communities Office to expand programs for African Heritage and Indigenous people and communities.
 - Establish a partnership with local barbershops.
- Engage the newly established “Black Council @ Blue” program at Blue Cross Blue Shield RI to develop programs and services for Providence residents and neighborhoods. Engagement should also include Common Care Alliance and Oak Street Health.
- Development of a culturally responsive diversionary respite center as an alternative to arrest and/or emergency room transport for substance users.

7 – CREATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD INCUBATOR(S) FOCUSED ON AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Commission recommends the development of neighborhood-based incubators that serve the direct socio-economic needs of local residents of Indigenous and African Heritage, and the communities they live within. This focus area also recognizes there is an untapped opportunity to support micro-businesses that are largely neighborhood and home-based.

- Rescue and reclaim the former Urban League site on Rosa Parks Way (Prairie Ave) as a future incubator and hub for African heritage and Indigenous social, business, and educational services. Efforts should include clearing debts, engagement, and building capacity.
 - Establish a partnership with the Community Libraries of Providence to establish a library at the Urban League featuring, maintaining, and curating the “Frazier Collection.”
- Invest in incubators in other urban renewal impacted neighborhoods including South Providence, Lippitt Hill, Smith Hill, and Olneyville.
- Creation of a Commercial Land Bank program to acquire commercial properties to advance business ownership and equity building for African Heritage and Indigenous people.

8 – ACCELERATE THE EVOLUTION OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AMBASSADORS GROUP (AAAG) INTO AN AFRICAN HERITAGE PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE MODEL

The African American Ambassadors Group has proactively advanced policies that directly address racial, social, and economic equity gaps for African heritage residents in Providence. The Commission recommends their groundbreaking work should be expanded to include the development of an independent research and policy center that continues to assemble supportive data and improve the lives of African heritage people in the city and state.

- Creation of a multi-faceted, policy-oriented research center for African Heritage and Indigenous people in collaboration with academic and community organizations with supporting personnel and funding.
- Produce community-driven research and policy statements that advance the socio-economic well-being of African heritage people and communities in the city and state.

9 – CREATION OF AN “AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS SURVIVORS & DESCENDANTS OF PROVIDENCE URBAN RENEWAL DISPLACEMENT” FUND

To undo the far-reaching damage of “urban renewal” projects within Providence neighborhoods, the Commission recommends the establishment of a fund to reconnect neighborhoods, repair the damage to families, and invest for sustainable and equitable growth.

- Establish a fund dedicated to providing African heritage and Indigenous individuals who are direct survivors and descendants of Providence urban renewal displacement from Lippitt Hill, West Elmwood, College Hill, South Providence, Olneyville, Fox Point, and other impacted neighborhoods.
 - Fund investments may include down payment assistance, education scholarships, workforce training, and small business development.
- Developing a grant program to redesign or deconstruct the outdated infrastructure that has hindered the growth of urban renewal impacted neighborhoods.



10 – EXPANDED REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN GOVERNING BODIES

Many public and private institutions have recognized the importance of recruiting people of color in leadership positions to improve performance and better represent the greater population. The Commission recommends the adoption of policies and practices that recruit and appoint more

African heritage, Indigenous, and other persons of color to key city governing bodies.

- Creation of a Municipal Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Commission
- Creation of a City Commission for Indigenous Rights
- Movement towards Full-Time Providence City Council

*Former Lippit Hill, Providence
Neighborhood Destabalization*



1951



1962

11 – EXPANSION OF CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN HERITAGE AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Commission believes Providence can lead the nation on how we tell the story of all residents by advancing public education and accelerating the inclusion of African heritage and Indigenous peoples' history and their important contributions to local, state, and national history. The Commission also believes that reconciliation and healing start with education and learning, and we will learn more when we learn together.

- Creation of, but not limited to, a Providence K-12 Comprehensive “A Matter of Truth” History Curriculum.
 - Engagement should include higher education institutions, vocational schools, and trade-schools.
- Advance related public education campaigns and outcomes.
- Funding to establish a School for African Heritage and Indigenous
- Creation and establishment of “Artist in Residence” fund
- Partnership with education institutions on degree attainment
 - Possible partnerships include Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI)

- Rename CCRI’s Providence Campus after Michael Van Leesten
- Ensure K-12 Curriculum is grounded in a Local Education of Rhode Island and New England History
- Providence Resident Scholarship Fund for African Heritage and Indigenous People
- Creation of a “Fund” for home-based day-care providers in the City of Providence
- Invest in a district-wide outreach coordinator position or program manager focusing on education and needs of African Heritage and Indigenous people.

THE TRUTH-RECONCILIATION-REPARATIONS FRAMEWORK

6. TRUTH

“A MATTER OF TRUTH” REPORT AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Truth-seeking process formally commenced on July 15, 2020, as Mayor Elorza signed an Executive Order that initiated a course of action to address institutional and systemic bias and racism affecting African heritage, Indigenous people, and people of color within the City of Providence. The announcement was hosted at Dexter Park and Training Grounds, a nine-acre park donated by Ebenezer Knight Dexter for military purposes that played a key role in the Dorr Rebellion, the Civil War, and World War I. The 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, who used these training grounds, was the first Black company from Rhode Island to serve in the Civil War, recruiting at least 1,800 soldiers from Rhode Island and surrounding states such as Connecticut and New York. The historical significance as this comprehensive process was launched was recognized by those in attendance.

The City partnered with the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, Rhode Island Historical Society, 1696 Heritage Group, and the Providence Preservation Society to work with the AAAG Truth-Telling Subgroup, comprised of nearly 20 community members from the larger African American Ambassador Group, to collect and analyze historical collections, documents, and artifacts that define the African heritage and Indigenous people's history within Providence and Rhode Island.

On March 29, 2021, Mayor Elorza joined local historians and community members to unveil the African American Ambassadors Group (AAAG) [Truth-Telling report: A Matter of Truth](#).

THE TRUTH PROCESS WAS LED BY THE FOLLOWING GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- The Truth shall begin by identifying, compiling, and synthesizing the relevant documents on the institution of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous people, and the forced assimilation that existed within the State of Rhode Island and the City of Providence.
- The Truth will include the documentation and examination of the facts related to the capture and procurement of Africans; the transport of Africans to Rhode Island for enslavement, including their treatment during transport; the sale and acquisition of Africans as chattel property in interstate and intrastate commerce; the treatment of African slaves in Rhode Island, including the deprivation of their freedom, exploitation of their labor, and destruction of their culture, language, religion, and families; and the extensive denial of humanity, sexual abuse, and chattelization of persons.
- The Truth will include the documentation and examination of the facts related to the capture and

procurement of Indigenous people; the sanctioned genocide of Indigenous people, the treatment of Indigenous people in Rhode Island, including the deprivation of their freedom, exploitation of their labor, seizing of their land, and destruction of their culture, language, religion, and families; and the extensive denial of humanity, sexual abuse, and chattelization of persons and property.

- The Truth will examine the role of the State of Rhode Island and the City of Providence in supporting the institution of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous people, and the forced assimilation and seizure of land in constitutional and statutory provisions.
- The Truth will examine the state and municipal laws that discriminated against formerly enslaved Africans and people of color and their descendants and Indigenous people from when they were deemed United States citizens to the present.
- The Truth will examine and document those laws, policies, and customs that created a “Separate and Unequal” existence for African heritage people in Providence and Rhode Island after the abolishment of slavery, which continued throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.
- The Truth will examine the other forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed African slaves and their descendants, Indigenous people, and people of color from when they were deemed United States citizens to the present, including but not limited to redlining, educational funding discrepancies, and predatory financial practices.

- The Truth will examine the lingering negative effects of the institution of slavery, Indigenous genocide, and seizure of Indigenous land.
- The Truth will examine and document that although slavery was abolished at the end of the Civil War, the brutalities of racial discrimination persisted under the guise of Jim Crow laws in the South and Jim Crow traditions in the North.

The Truth process required identifying, compiling, and presenting the evidentiary documentation of the institutions of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous people, and the ongoing discrimination that resonates in the present day. The research effort, led by the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society in partnership with several historical institutions, collected over 650 primary and secondary sources of documentation and historical narrative that unveiled 400 years of Providence and Rhode Island history. The report was divided into seven sections, with each section containing detailed examinations of the people, events, and places that would shape the history of the city and state.

The Report begins in pre-1600 and concludes with the African heritage legacy continuing beyond 2020. It identifies the extent of the manipulation of race as a means of controlling enslaved individuals of African heritage and the role of institutions and lawmakers in perpetuating discriminatory and racist policies.



The report provided a unique and expanded interpretation of history beginning with Indigenous land taking and the enslavement of African heritage people in the 17th and 18th centuries, to the 20th century publicly-sanctioned redlining, discriminatory employment and housing practices, urban renewal, and interstate highway improvements that accelerated the deconstruction of largely African heritage and limited-income neighborhoods in Providence. The collected historical data within the report provided a much-expanded approach of a legacy

of the racial and class unfairness that has created a persistent multigenerational racial wealth and equity gap that continues to disadvantage descendants into the present day. The report's main premise describes the historical racial wealth and equity gap for African heritage, Indigenous, and other people of color as the underpinning of contemporary racial, neighborhood, and class disparities in Providence.

7. RECONCILIATION

Once the Truth phase was completed, findings were used to begin the process of Reconciliation. To advance this work, the City unveiled a Request for Proposals to launch the Reconciliation phase of the City's commitment to Truth-Telling, Reconciliation and Municipal Reparations after receiving a \$100,000 grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.

The Providence Cultural Equity Initiative, Roger Williams University, and Providence Public Library partnered with the City and AAAG Truth-Telling and Reconciliation Subgroup, comprised of nearly 20 community members from the larger African American Ambassador Group, to launch a framework for reconciliation which included several months of engagement and discussion across the community, reflecting on the information discovered and the research compiled in [**A Matter of Truth**](#).

On February 28, 2022, [**the Framework for Reconciliation**](#) was publicly unveiled. It was piloted in the neighborhoods of Fox Point, Lippitt Hill, Upper South Providence, and West Elmwood, and outlines a model and proof of concept to continue Reconciliation in perpetuity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The framework is informed by deep community engagement, including engagement with an estimated 1,500 individuals at approximately 11 community cultural events, 378 survey responses, 16 lead stakeholders with generational personal, familial, and community ties to four focused neighborhoods, 29 interviews of community members and engagement with community members across several African and Indigenous Heritage community events. The process included

the development of a multimedia initiative to directly connect more individuals with the "A Matter of Truth" report, including a website featuring documentary interviews and reconciliation framework report.

It is important to note that the process of Reconciliation is ongoing, and thus the AAAG Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Subgroup continued community engagement that began during the Reconciliation phase during the time when the Reparations Commission was meeting.

The Subgroup, with support of the Municipal Reparations Commission and in partnership with the City of Providence, held six (6) Town Halls across different neighborhoods to engage community members in discussion around reparations in the City of Providence. These town halls were held in community centers across the city and included Smith Hill Community Library, Wanskuck Community Library, Vincent Brown Recreation Center, United Way, and the Nonviolence Institute. Over forty community members attended to provide ideas, knowledge, and recommendations for what reparations might entail for people in Providence.

Most of the conversations were focused on answering the question of: "Where should funding for reparations be directed?"

At every meeting, residents expressed a need for investment in homeownership, and accommodating different resources for different people. Other themes and forms of reparations discussed included Black Media, building investment in historically Black neighborhoods, direct financial payments to eligible individuals, Black businesses for and by Black people, education (both K-12 and post-secondary), historical landmarks, and a variety of community investments like real estate,

local jobs, entrepreneurship, mental health resources, resource databases, and more. The community conversations provided the Providence Reparations Commission with an initial understanding of residents' needs and interest areas and were used to guide the Commission's recommendations.

Community meetings also highlighted critical frames for the work, including a recognition of the long-term nature of the impact and a need to build trust between the community and the City through strong engagement and communication to ensure that public information and knowledge is accessible. There was a clear sense from the residents that there is an understanding of the impact of the racial wealth gap on residents past and present in Providence, the importance of sharing information (financial, historical, etc.) across generations, and the need to hold institutions accountable and the need to follow through on recommendations that will help to close the racial wealth gap.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Coalition designed a survey to engage community members online and at community events. Several drafts were reviewed prior to approval on September 10, 2021 from the Roger Williams University's Human Subjects Review Board. The survey collected demographic information and asked questions about engagement with A Matter of Truth report and perspectives on the injustices that should be addressed, and parties involved in reconciliation.

The responses suggested that more work needed to be done to make works like the "A Matter of Truth" report visible and accessible. For example, 55% of the respondents had never heard of the report, and the number increased to 60% for folks

identifying as Black, Indigenous and other People of Color. The responses aligned with pilot projects that have focused on the long-term impacts of the City's racist mid-20th century redevelopment projects. The largest thematic category identified was housing, consisting of homeownership, gentrification, homeless and redlining. The second largest theme in the responses was education and the "lack of ethnic studies in PVD schools", followed by policing, police violence against communities of color" and "over incarceration."

The results confirmed that reconciling the truth of what happened with the lived reality that the City's African heritage and Indigenous residents experience should be a community-driven process that centers the voices and perspectives of the City's African heritage and Indigenous community leaders and organizations. The findings also highlight that reconciliation cannot take place without substantial involvement from the government entities that possess the means to take meaningful action to redress these injustices in light of a fuller understanding of what recognizing the truth requires of all of us.

8. MUNICIPAL REPARATIONS

On February 28, 2022, Mayor Elorza signed a community-driven Executive Order establishing the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission to address the injuries outlined in the Truth Telling and Reconciliation phases and provide clear recommendations to the City on appropriate policies, programs, and projects to begin repairing harm. The Commission has 13 members, with seven members appointed by Mayor Elorza and six members appointed by the Providence City Council.

The Providence Municipal Reparations Commission met weekly from April 25, 2022 through July 25, 2022. The meetings included a range of activities, including examinations of reparations being advanced in other cities, current initiatives in the City of Providence, and explorations of remedies best suitable for meeting the needs of African Heritage and Indigenous people. Below are summaries of the various components of the meetings held over four months with engagement of over 30 people either in person or on zoom.

REPARATION WORK UNDERWAY IN OTHER CITIES AND STATES

Early in the Commission's convening, City staff presented on the various ways in which different cities across the country have been engaging with their reparations efforts, including Amherst and Boston, MA, Asheville and Durham, NC, Evanston, IL, Iowa City, IA, St. Paul, MN, Kansas City and St. Louis, MO, Sacramento, CA, Austin, TX and Tallahassee, OK.

Of the 12 cities, at least 50% have committed funds drawing from various sources such as cannabis sales tax, existing laws, ARPA funding, private and grant funding, taxes on city land, and donations

from residents and companies through the yearly property tax.

The reparations investment by the other cities ranges, though a significant number of them (approximately 50%) have focused on housing and land ownership by African-Americans. Also included in investment strategies are direct payments, higher education opportunities and scholarships, small business development and career opportunities, healthcare initiatives, community resources, and investments in non-profit businesses.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS

From the very first meeting of the Commission, members agreed to the following core values: **be bold, center innovation, have impact, be future-facing, be transformational, listen to each other and the community, be uplifting, and center healing.** In order to best advance these values, the Commission embarked upon a comprehensive community engagement strategy to ensure the fullest community participation in framing final recommendations.

Recognizing that the issues surrounding racial reparations can be complex and challenging, the Commission developed a comprehensive community engagement strategy and platform of public discussions and forums to best equip themselves and the residents of Providence with accurate information to make wise choices around sustainable investment strategies. The Commission believes that community engagement enables government decision-making organizations, including governments, to listen, learn, and build deeper, stronger, and more trusting

relationships within the communities they serve. Most importantly, the community engagement process aimed to improve residents' and stakeholders' knowledge of the past, present and future consequences of implementing a reparative justice strategy.

To ensure community involvement, the Commission held each meeting as a public meeting enabling the public to listen in on all Commission meetings either in-person or online. Each Commission meeting also set aside time for public comment and participation. The Commission also developed a website at <https://aaagpvd.com/providence-municipal-reparations-commission/> that included a link for members of the public to provide direct feedback.

Recognizing that not all residents and stakeholders could attend Commission meetings, a series of community forums were held throughout the city as outlined earlier in this report to further inform and enlist community input. These forums provided invaluable contributions towards program and policy prioritizations that are largely reflected within the investment recommendations in this report.

PROVIDENCE COVID-19 RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY TASK REPORT

Mayor Elorza and the City Council established the City of Providence's COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Task Force as a community engagement undertaking known as the Providence Rescue Plan. The plan details community needs and aligned investment opportunities for the deployment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds available to the City of Providence. The Task Force convened during a

three month timeframe to oversee a comprehensive community engagement strategy for public input that included a broad range of resident input form across the city and to provide their recommendations on how to allocate ARPA funds. The Task Force provided a final report with recommendations that have been very helpful in guiding the work of the Commission, particularly those recommendations that advance equity building, self sufficiency, and entrepreneurship among Providence's residents most in need. The community engagement and findings of the Task Force have been critical in providing a platform of areas of priority investment for the Commission. Areas of recommendations that most resonated with the Commission's work included:

- Investing in arts organizations, particularly BIPOC-led organizations
- Expanding financial recovery tools such as loans and grants to small businesses
- Supporting wealth building programs for historically underinvested communities
- Focusing on increasing housing opportunities for people and families with low or no income
- Supporting justice system reforms
- Making public health and safety investments
- Investing in economic stabilization programs
- Providing direct relief to hardest-hit communities
- Investing in capacity-building infrastructure for community-based organizations

PROVIDENCE REPARATIONS DISPARITY ASSESSMENT

Inequity does not happen by coincidence. As our nation was founded under the guiding principles, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” the stark reality is racial discrimination has also greatly crippled many Americans. Throughout history, local, state, and federal governments have played a significant role in creating and maintaining racial disparities. Here in the City of Providence, years of government practices have created and produced conditions of socio-economic injustices for African heritage, Indigenous, and other arriving people of color that exist to this very day.

An important part of the Commission’s efforts has been to document racial disparities that continue to restrict residents and neighborhoods from fully participating in the city’s economy through wealth building and social equity. As a complement to the historical documentation uncovered within the “A Matter of Truth” report, data sets have been assembled to provide present-day socio-economic areas of racial disparity across a number of city systems. That data clearly demonstrates that inequity exists within the City of Providence among race, zip codes, and income. Both past and present data will serve as a guide and justification for Reparations investment recommendations.

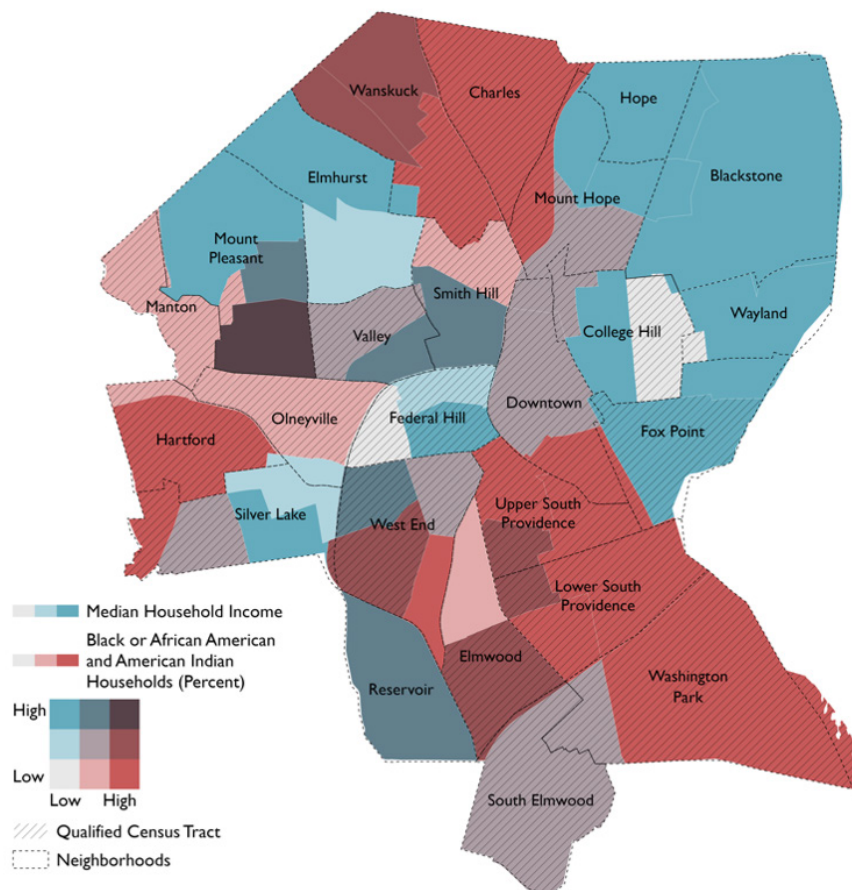


Figure 1: Census tracts within the City of Providence mapping income disparity and prevalence of select races

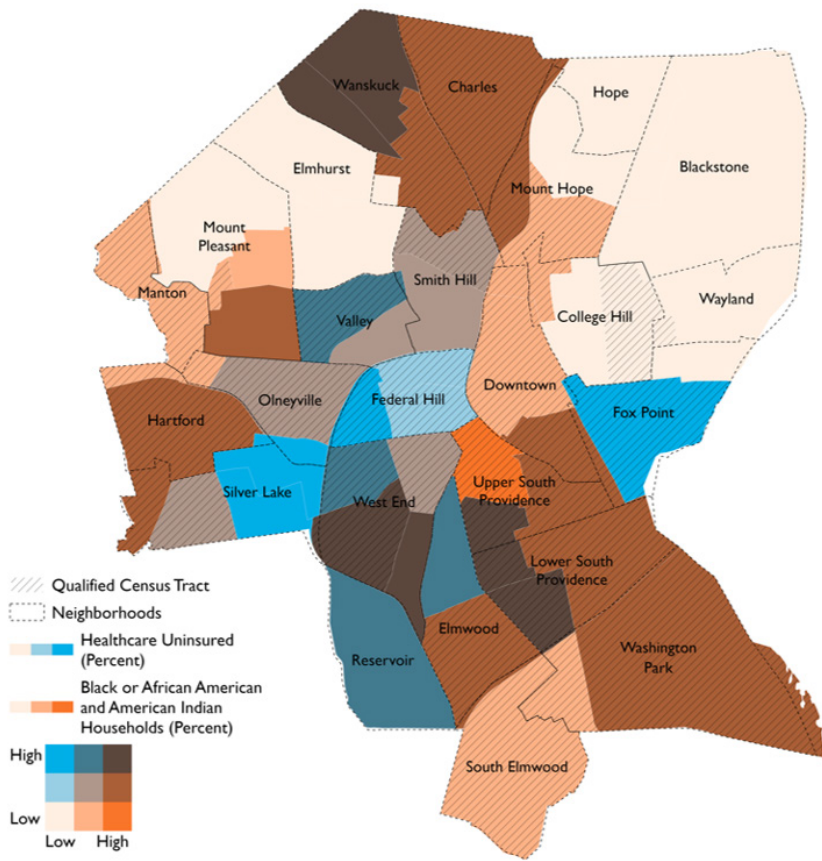


Figure 2: Census tracts within the City of Providence mapping uninsured rates and prevalence of select races

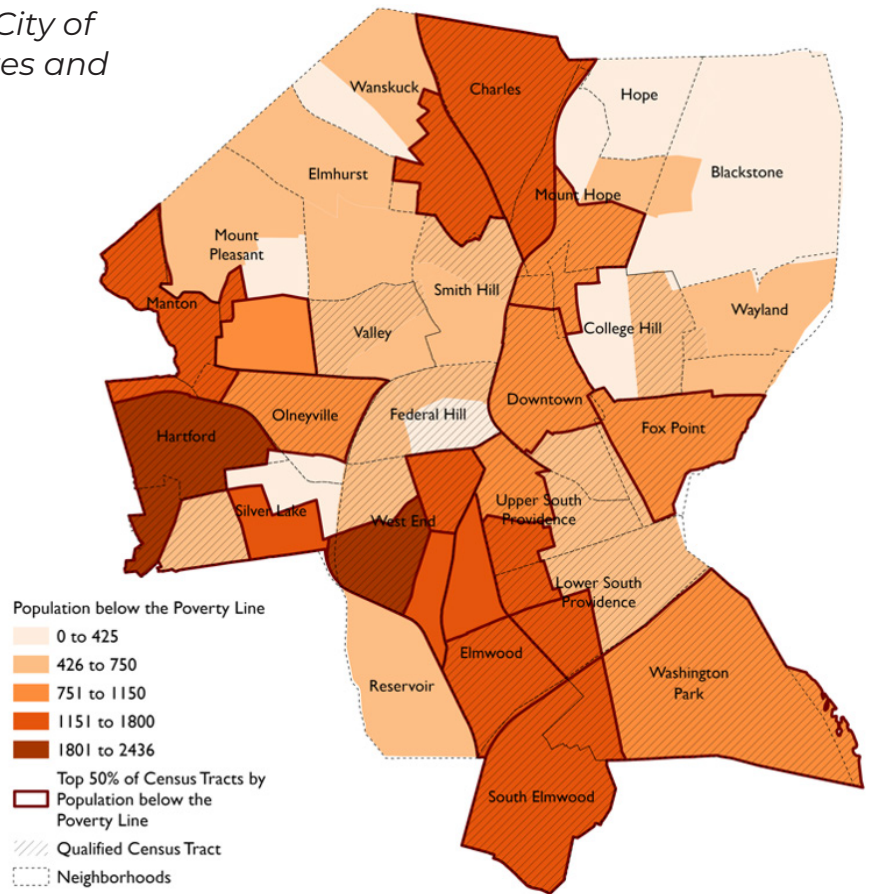


Figure 3: Census tracts within the City of Providence mapping the impoverished population

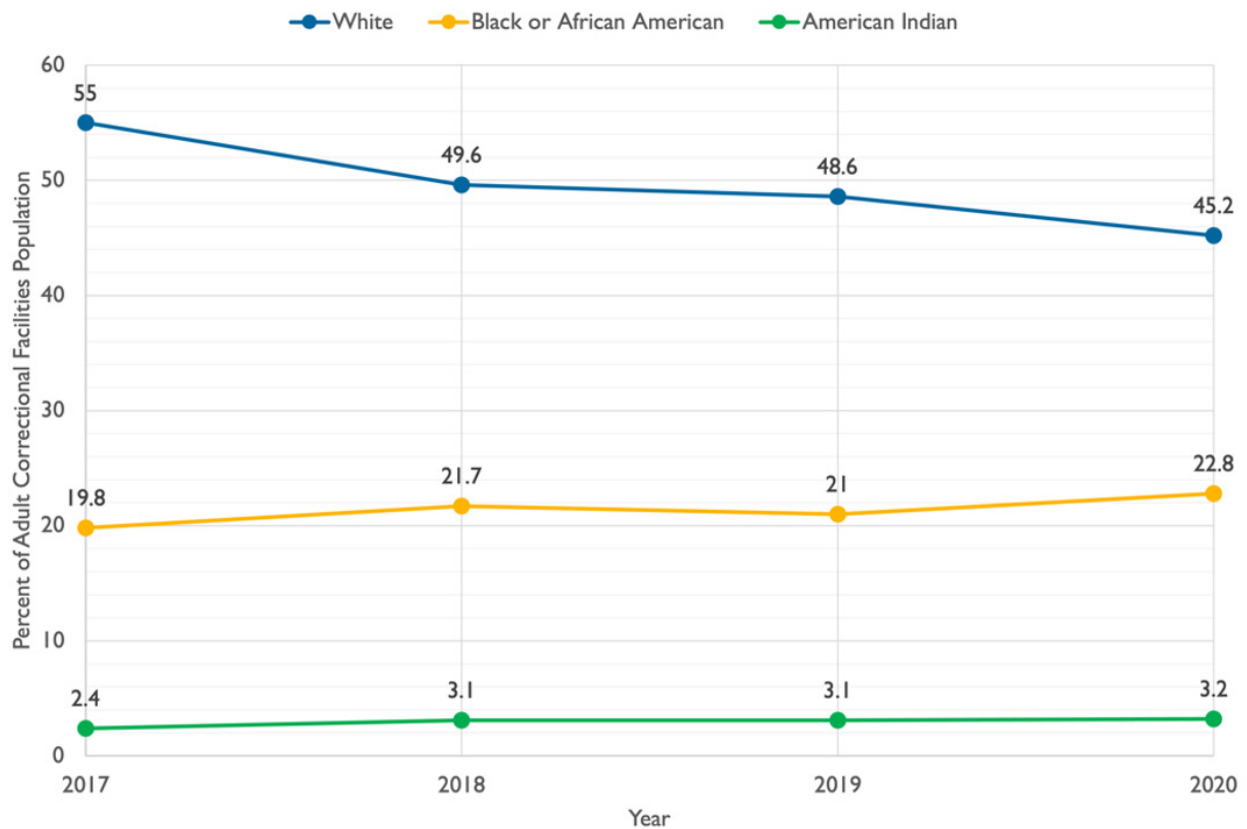


Figure 4: Change in racial makeup of the adult correctional facilities population

Table 1: 2018-2019 School Year Assessment Results for PPSD and the State

Assessment	Providence	Rhode Island
	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations
DLM – English Language Arts/Literacy	15.4%	23.7%
DLM – Mathematics	5.3%	11.8%
DLM – Science	8%	15%
NGSA – Science	10.9%	31.3%
PSAT – English Language Arts/Literacy	37.9%	60.1%
PSAT – Mathematics	15.9%	31%
RICAS – English Language Arts/Literacy	17.2%	38.5%
RICAS – Mathematics	11.9%	29.8%
SAT – English Language Arts/Literacy	25.5%	50.5%
SAT – Mathematics	14.8%	31.2%

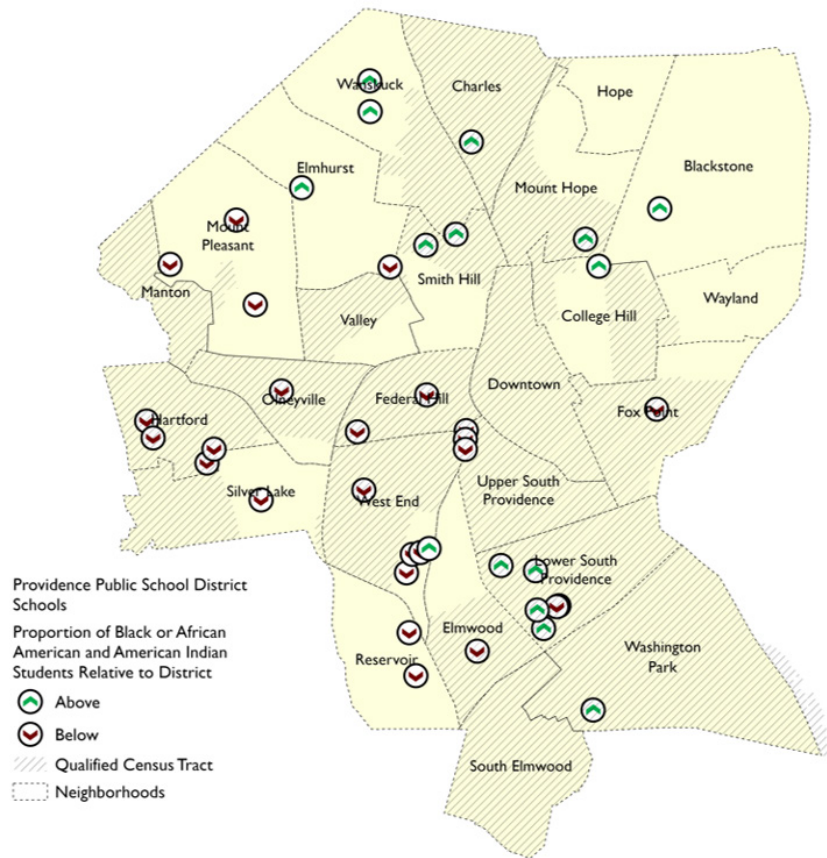


Figure 5: PPSD schools with disproportionate percentages of Black or African American and American Indian students

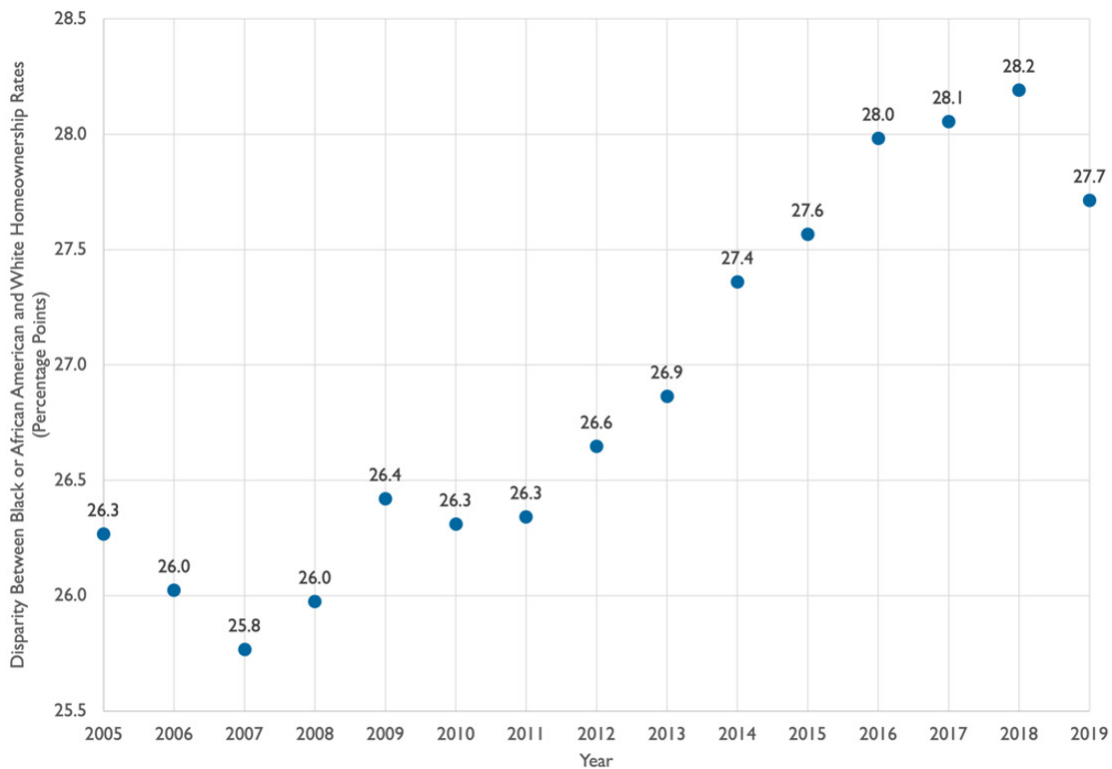


Figure 6: Change in homeownership disparity between White and Black or African American populations from 2005 and 2019

9. CONCLUSION

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

From the moment when the first English colonists settled Providence in 1636, Indigenous and soon after enslaved African heritage people were denied equal standing and a chance at self-sufficiency and determination. Although some within the colony, such as founder Roger Williams, sympathized with the oppressed, any laws that would have empowered them were largely ignored. Instead, laws were employed to further subjugate and control early people of color. As compiled and documented within the “A Matter of Truth” report, the systemic system of racialized discrimination throughout Providence’s history was not an aberration by a few bigoted individuals or small institutions; it was a matter of sustained public policy and private business practice. As Providence grew over time, so too did municipal public policies and practices with the tragic consequences of associating crime with race and class, a path of governance that would continue to shape Providence’s policing policies well into the present day.

The research and recommendations for reparative justice compiled within this report will help to create an environment and future policy platforms for positive change that fosters fairness, equity, and justice. Of equal importance, the report’s recommendations open a path to true accountability for public and private institutions who have been responsible for harm to residents of Providence simply because of their race, ethnicity, and income levels.

Improving the lives of Providence’s poorest residents and the neighborhoods where they reside is a critical need and a complex challenge under any circumstance, that has been further accelerated because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of

Providence has been consistently tracked as a “hot spot” for concentrations of COVID-19 infection rates throughout changing variants. The pandemic has added an urgency as we seek to ensure that all residents have access to programs and services as declared within the U.S. Department of Treasury American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Rules and Regulations, *“too many Americans remain unemployed, out of the labor force, or unable to pay their bills, with this pain particularly acute among lower-income Americans and communities of color.”* It is the intent of the Municipal Reparations Commission to recommend the use of ARPA funds to drive catalytic innovation within municipal programs and policies to best improve the socio-economic conditions of Providence’s neediest residents and neighborhoods.

The visionary and innovative work of the Commission is a compilation of research and community engagement with the express objective of moving people, institutions, and businesses in a similar direction towards universal equity. The work is based upon the premise through the study and documentation of the City of Providence’s past history of racialized discrimination, that we can begin to understand and address the present-day disparities within residents and neighborhoods. Today’s racial disparities can be best defined as the making of the racial wealth gap that has prevented Providence’s residents of color from fully participating in the economy which simultaneously provided access to wealth-building for the city’s white residents. While sanctioned public practices of indigenous land-taking, slavery, redlining, housing, and employment discrimination may not exist today, the accumulated effects of four centuries of racialized discrimination is largely responsible for

disparities in income, health, education, and opportunity that continue to this day. The prime objective of the work of the Commission is to recommend to the Mayor and City Council appropriate investment and policy remedies of rehabilitation and restitution for those City of Providence residents who are impacted in the present day by the deliberating effects of systemic discrimination.

A CALL FOR FUNDING PARTNERSHIPS

It is important to note that universities, hospitals, and financial institutions within the City of Providence also bear some historical complicity in promoting and profiting from racialized discriminatory policies and practices. As the Commission makes specific and strategic recommendations for positive change, private institutions can also step forward and join the City in investing in residents and neighborhoods of greatest socio-economic need. The first step for these institutions is to follow Brown University in acknowledging previous complicity as a crucial opportunity in establishing racial equity and justice in Providence. The second step is to actively engage in the work of the City and proactively consider making direct monetary investments in support of the Commission's recommendations that are best aligned with each institution's charitable giving policies.

A recommended starting point for this collaborative effort is for leading public and private institutions to take part in a community gathering forum to share ideas and best practices. If Providence-based public and private institutions can move forward together to uplift our city's residents with most need, the City

of Providence can achieve new levels of prosperity, success, and equity.

ADVANCING A NATIONAL OBJECTIVE FOR REPARATIONS

During the summer of 2020, the protests that erupted across the United States and later the world following the killing of George Floyd marked one of the most vivid illustrations of when many people, public, and private institutions were moved to become more aware of diversity, inclusion, and equity, particularly for African heritage people. Under the banner of "Black Lives Matter," a new social movement was born that highlighted the on-going racism, discrimination, and racial inequality experienced by African heritage people. The events also pushed to the forefront of public debate a renewed case for reparations. While reparations generally, as defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary, includes "the act of making amends, offering expiation, or giving satisfaction for a wrong or injury," many across the nation see reparations as the explicit act of redressing the restricting of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for African heritage people that began with enslavement and continued through the centuries in the form of discriminatory policies and practices.

Led by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson of Texas, H.R.40 was enacted as a national "Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act." While the act was approved by a House committee, nearly one year later, the full House has yet to vote on it. In the wake of lack of national movement on reparations, many cities and states have begun to lead the effort establishing reparations commissions at the local level. And in taking a cue from civil rights history,

social movements that begin locally can ultimately help support and drive a national movement.

One area of attention that the federal government may take into consideration in advancing a nationally-supported reparations policy is building upon President Biden's January 20, 2021 Executive Order on "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government." The executive order placed racial equity as a leading indicator for federal agency investment policy. An inclusion by Congress of achieving racial equity as a national objective for federal, state, and local investment policies will greatly complement the work of states and municipalities seeking to achieve full equity for all residents.

A direct example of a pathway to include racial equity as a national objective is amending Section 101(c) of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development and Block Grant (CDBG) program, which supports community development activities to build stronger and more resilient communities across the nation. The authorizing statute for CDBG sets forth national objectives of the program as:

- Benefiting low and moderate-income persons
- Preventing or eliminating slums or blight
- Meeting other community development needs having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and other financial resources are not available to meet such needs.

By adding as a national CDBG national objective "Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Populations and Communities," local and state government authorities would have the program and policy latitude to implement expanded CDBG programs and services with the additional objective of reducing racial wealth and equity gaps within their jurisdictions. Said inclusion of "Racial Equity" investment programs as a national objective would also be directly empowering to the work of municipal reparations commissions across the country.

Once again, the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission is grateful to all stakeholders who engaged in this work. It is only through the collective thoughts, recommendations and expertise of all participants that we have been able to advance this important social justice agenda for the betterment of Providence residents.

APPENDIX A:

Executive Order 2020-13: Declaration on Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations

<https://www.providenceri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Mayors-Executive-Order-2020-13-1.pdf>

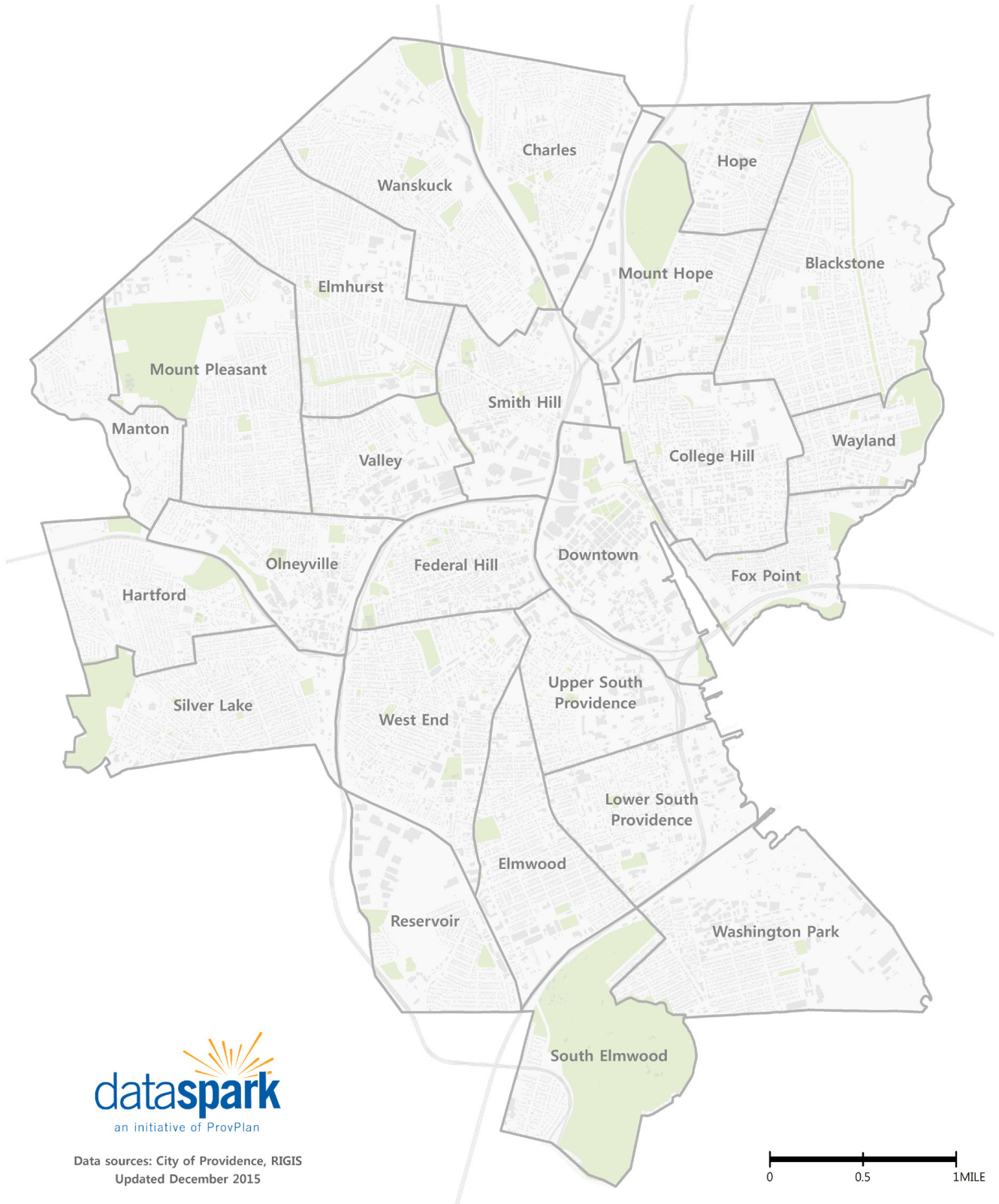
APPENDIX B:

Executive Order 2022-4: Establishing the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission

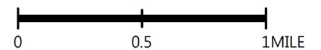
https://www.providenceri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Elorza-EO_2022-4.pdf

Map of Qualified Census Tracts

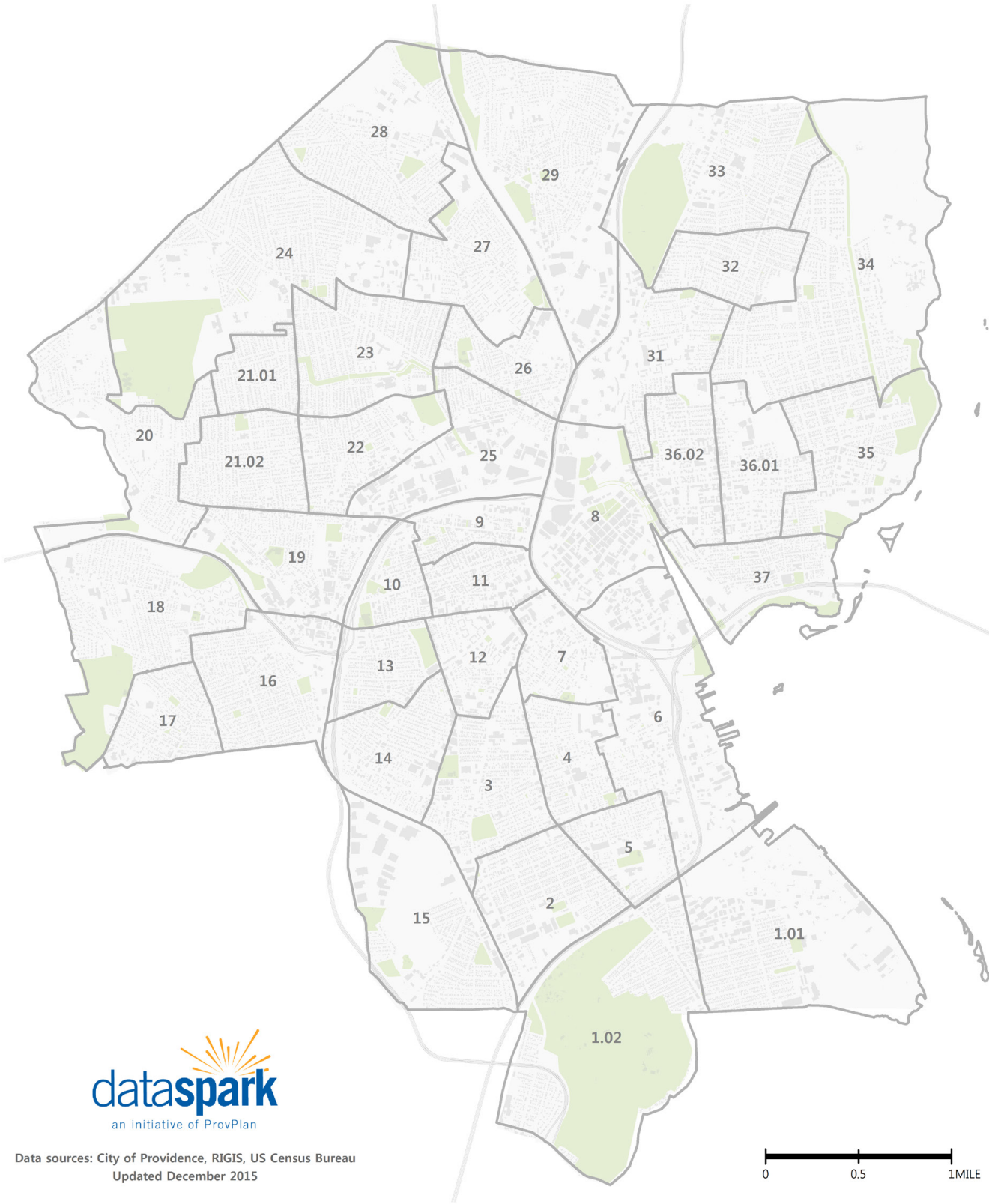
Providence Neighborhoods



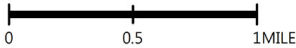
Data sources: City of Providence, RIGIS
Updated December 2015



Providence Census Tracts 2010



Data sources: City of Providence, RIGIS, US Census Bureau
Updated December 2015



APPENDIX D:

Providence Reparations Disparity Assessment

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Summary

The following data review analyzes the rate of business ownership and significant disparities along racial lines that exists when reviewing access to financing, access to banking, as well as access to federal Covid-19 stimulus programs. The data suggests that Black or African American-owned employer firms in the State of Rhode Island and Providence-Warwick, Rhode Island-Massachusetts Metropolitan Area are underrepresented when compared to the corresponding populations. The data also suggests financing barriers could be a potential cause of the disparities. A survey conducted by the Federal Reserve Banks in 2021 found significant differences in total financing received for businesses owned by different races; while 35% of White-owned businesses received all of the financing they sought, only 16% of Black or African American-owned businesses received the same, and 47% of Black or African American-owned businesses were denied entirely compared to 34% of White-owned businesses. While federal programs such as Payment Protection Program (PPP) were designed to assist struggling businesses from the negative economic impacts of COVID-19, that assistance overwhelmingly benefited White business owners. Only 43% of Black or African American-owned businesses reportedly received all the PPP funding they applied for, as opposed to 79% of White-owned businesses.

Data Review

Nationwide, racial disparities exist in business ownership. For example, in 2019, only 2.3% of employer firms were Black or African American-owned, while the Black or African American population comprised 14.2% of the United State population^[1]. In 2018, just under 24,000 of employer firms were American Indian* or Alaska Native-owned, which represented just over 0.4% of all employer firms in the nation and was about half of the American Indian* and Alaska Native representation in the United States population^{[2][3]}. The Minority Business Development Agency argues that the disparity between the share of minority-owned businesses and the minority population leads to missed opportunities in the United States economy, known as an “opportunity gap”; if minority business enterprise performance matched non-minority business performance, then the United States would have seen another \$2.86 trillion and \$0.38 trillion in gross receipts from Black or African American-owned and American Indian* or Alaska Native-owned businesses, respectively^[2] ^[4]. While state and metropolitan-specific data is not available for American Indian*-owned businesses, data from the 2019 American Business Survey shows that Black or African American-owned employer firms in the State of Rhode Island and Providence-Warwick, Rhode Island-Massachusetts Metropolitan Area are also underrepresented; 1.4% of employer firms in the State are Black or African American-owned, while the State’s population is comprised of 6.6% Black or African American residents, and 1.1% of employer firms in the Providence-Warwick, Rhode

Island-Massachusetts Metropolitan Area are Black or African American-owned, while the Area's population is comprised of 8.6% Black or African American residents^{[3][5]}.

The disparities in business ownership among racial groups could partially be explained by financing barriers. A survey conducted by the Federal Reserve Banks in 2021 found significant differences in total financing received for businesses owned by different races; while 35% of White-owned businesses received all of the financing they sought, only 16% of Black or African American-owned businesses received the same, and 47% of Black or African American-owned businesses were denied entirely compared to 34% of White-owned businesses^[6]. Similar disparities still existed with low credit risk firms, and an analysis of the 2018 data by the Federal Reserve that controlled for firm characteristics and performance found that Black-owned businesses were 7% less likely to obtain credit overall, and 20% and 17% less likely at large and small banks, respectively^{[6][7]}. On top of capital access, minority firms have been reported to pay higher interest rates on business loans at 7.8% compared to 6.4% for non-minority firms^[8].

In 2020, businesses nationwide experienced unprecedented hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the hardships were not faced in equity. Instead, initial estimates from Current Population Survey data showed that between February 2020 to April 2020, the number of active Black or African American business owners fell by 41% compared to a decrease of 17% in active White business owners^[9]. When federal aid was made available through the Payment Protection Program (PPP), initially, Black, or African American business owners were disproportionately disregarded as the first round of loans was directed to employer

firms (95% of Black or African American-owned business are nonemployer firms, while 78% of White-owned business are nonemployer firms)^[1]. In addition, only 43% of Black or African American-owned businesses reportedly received all of the PPP funding they applied for, while 79% of White-owned businesses did^[1].

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* United States Census Bureau Definition: American Indian or Alaska Native refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. The American Indian and Alaska Native population includes people who marked the American Indian or Alaska Native checkbox or reported entries such as Navajo, Blackfeet, Inupiat, Yup'ik, or Central American Indian groups or South American Indian groups.

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EDUCATIONAL DISPARITY

Summary

The following data review analyzes the educational disparities that exists in The City of Providence, Rhode Island, and compares it to data from the State of Rhode Island, as well as nationwide statistics. The educational disparities that exist in educational attainment suggests that the City of Providence, lags both the State of Rhode Island and the United States in its percent of population with at least a high school diploma or equivalent. When looking even further at those who hold at least a bachelor’s degree, that disparity is even greater, with Whites almost twice as likely to have a bachelor’s degree than Black or African American, and almost 4 times as likely to have one compared to American Indians*. The disparities are not only demonstrated by educational attainment data, but also in the City’s educational systems. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Providence Public School District (PPSD) underperformed the State in all reported assessments. Mirroring the racial disparities, students who met the definition of not economically disadvantages in the State significantly outperformed those students who were economically disadvantaged in the 2019 Rhode Island NAEP across grade levels and subjects

Data Review

Disparities in educational attainment exist among the adult population in the

City of Providence. As a whole, the City lags behind both the State of Rhode Island and the United States in its percent of population with at least a high school diploma or equivalent (United States: 88.5%; Rhode Island: 89.2%; City of Providence: 82.8%). Within the City, attainment disparities exist along racial lines; 87.4% of the White population is at least a high school graduate, while 84.9% of the Black or African American population and only 62.4% of the American Indian* population achieved the same degree. The disparity is even greater when looking at the population with at least a Bachelor’s degree, as 40.5% of the White population holds a Bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 23.3% of the Black or African American population and 13% of the American Indian* population^[1].

The differences among the adult population can possibly be explained, in part, by disparities in the City’s education system, in areas, such as assessments,

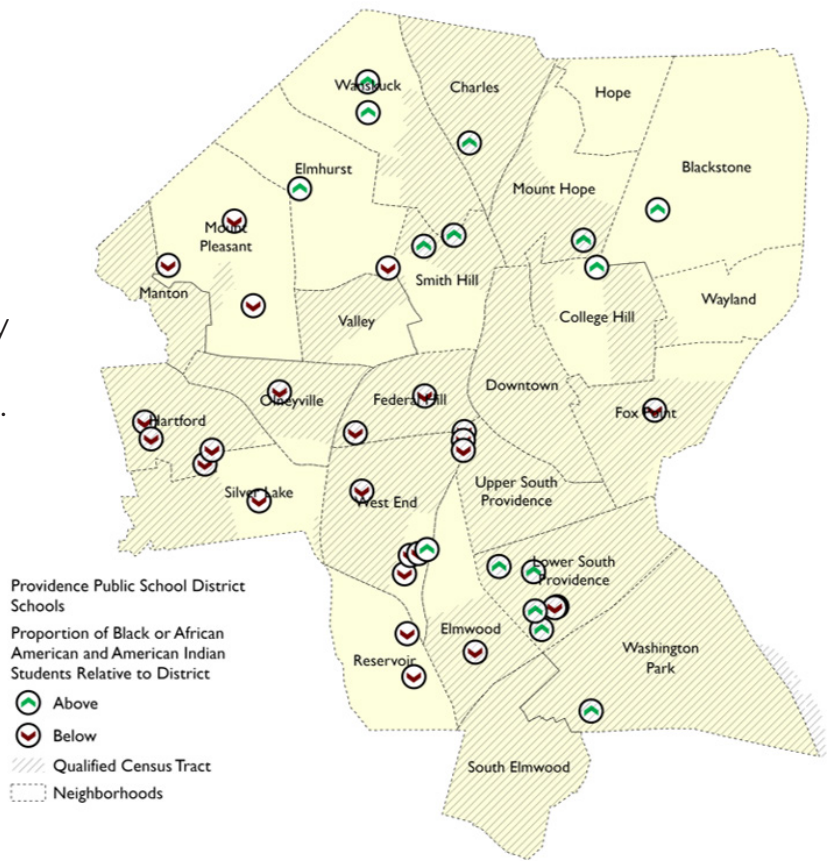
Table 1: 2018-2019 School Year Assessment Results for PPSD and the State

Assessment	Providence Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Rhode Island Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations
DLM – English Language Arts/Literacy	15.4%	23.7%
DLM – Mathematics	5.3%	11.8%
DLM – Science	8%	15%
NGSA – Science	10.9%	31.3%
PSAT – English Language Arts/Literacy	37.9%	60.1%
PSAT – Mathematics	15.9%	31%
RICAS – English Language Arts/Literacy	17.2%	38.5%
RICAS – Mathematics	11.9%	29.8%
SAT – English Language Arts/Literacy	25.5%	50.5%
SAT – Mathematics	14.8%	31.2%

Figure 5: PPSD schools with disproportionate percentages of Black or African American and American Indian students

graduation rates, and postsecondary participation. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Providence Public School District (PPSD) underperformed the State in all reported assessments; Table 1 lists the reported assessments and results^[2]. Statewide, the 2020-2021 school year dropout rate was 7.8%, which was 3 percentage points lower than PPSD's 10.8% dropout rate, and the State had 63.7% of graduates enroll in postsecondary education within 1 academic year, while PPSD only had 48.7% of graduates enroll^[3].

Within schools in the City and State, similar disparities exist among races. About 16% of students in PPSD are Black or African American or American Indian* – for schools with a proportion of Black or African American and American Indian* students above the district percentage, mapped in Figure 5, the 2019-2020 school year average per pupil expenditure was \$14,265; for schools with a proportion of Black or African American and American Indian* students below the district percentage, the 2019-2020 school year average per pupil expenditure was \$15,476^[3]. In addition, White students in the State significantly outperformed Black or African American students in the 2019 Rhode Island National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) across grade levels and subjects; in Grade 4 and Grade 8 assessments of reading and math, Rhode Island's White students had at least 2x (and up to 3x) the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient and Advanced categories compared to Black or African American students^[3] (American Indian* data was not reported). Dropout rates in PPSD schools were reported higher for White students at 11% compared to Black or African American students at 8.5%, but both were significantly lower than the 20% dropout rate for American Indian*



students^[3]. Among students in PPSD who did graduate, the largest percentage of White students enrolled in postsecondary education, followed by Black or African American, and then American Indian* students (White: 66.9%; Black or African American: 58.7%; American Indian*: 33.3%)^[3].

The Rhode Island Department of Education shares similar data based on economic status, showing the education disparities between not economically disadvantaged (NOT ECD) and economically disadvantaged (ECD) students, where ECD students are enrolled in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program. Mirroring the racial disparities, NOT ECD students in the State significantly outperformed ECD students in the 2019 Rhode Island NAEP across grade levels and subjects; in Grade 4 and Grade 8 assessments of

reading and math, Rhode Island's NOT ECD students had at least 2x (and up to 3.5x) the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient and Advanced categories compared to ECD students^[3]. Despite staggering differences in assessment performance, in PPSD schools, ECD students had a significantly lower dropout rates at 13.2% compared to the 23.3% rate for NOT ECD students^[3]. Among students in PPSD who did graduate though, 68.3% of NOT ECD students enrolled in postsecondary education, while only 47.1% of ECD students enrolled^[3].

End Notes

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* United States Census Bureau Definition: American Indian or Alaska Native refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. The American Indian and Alaska Native population includes people who marked the American Indian or Alaska Native checkbox or reported entries such as Navajo, Blackfeet, Inupiat, Yup'ik, or Central American Indian groups or South American Indian groups.

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HEALTH DISPARITY

Summary

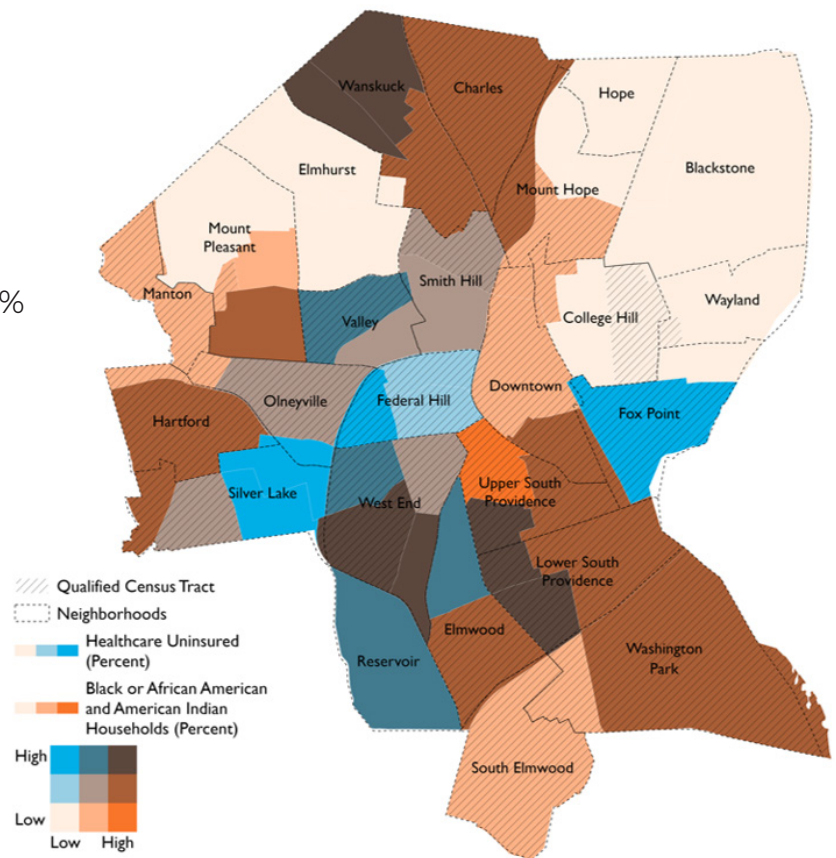
The following data review analyzes the health disparities nationwide, and how the City of Providence, Rhode Island compares to national averages. The data suggests that nationwide Black or African American overall are more likely to contract COVID-19, and even more likely to be hospitalized compared to other races. Within the State of Rhode Island, the data suggests an even greater chance for infection and hospitalization compared to White counterparts. This disparity does not just exist within the confines of COVID-19, but in access to health care in general. The data shows that in The City of Providence, RI in 2020, 8.9% of Black or African Americans were insured, compared to 4.6% of the White population. Beyond access, disparities exist in rates and treatment within areas, such as, mental health, maternal health, child and youth health, and public health.

Data Review

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the existence of health disparities within the United States and Rhode Island. Nationwide, Black or African Americans were 1.1 times more likely to contract and 2.2 times more likely to be hospitalized by COVID-19 than their White counterparts; American Indians* were 1.5 times more likely to contract and 2.8 times more likely to be hospitalized by COVID-19 than their White counterparts^[1]. Within the State of Rhode Island, the disparity between White and American Indian* residents was less drastic, but still prevalent (American Indians* were 1.2 times more likely to contract and 1.05

times more likely to be hospitalized by COVID-19 than their White counterparts), and the case disparity between Black or African American residents and their White counterparts was even greater with Black or African Americans being 1.65 times more likely to contract COVID-19 (Black or African Americans were 1.75 times more likely to be hospitalized in the State)^[2].

Figure 2: Census tracts within the City of Providence mapping uninsured rates and prevalence of select races



While the health disparity was emphasized during the pandemic, the disparity is not limited to COVID-19. Numerous data sets highlight the health inequities in healthcare access that exist nationally and locally. In the City of Providence in 2020, 8.9% of the Black or African American population and 10.4% of the American Indian* population were uninsured, while only 4.6% of the White population was

uninsured^[3]. Figure 2 maps the relationship between percent uninsured and percent Black or African American and American Indian* households within the City of Providence. Census tracts in brown indicate areas of the City with high uninsurance rates and high percentages of Black or African American and American Indian* households. Qualified census tracts are indicated with hatches.

In addition to insurance barriers, in 2018, the Rhode Island Department of Health reported that 21.2% of Blacks in the State had no doctor, 14.4% needed to see a doctor but could not because of cost, in past 12 months, and 20.1% had no routine checkup in past 12 months, compared to 9.9%, 7.8%, and 14.1% of the White population, respectively^[4].

Beyond access, disparities exist in rates and treatment within areas, such as, mental health, maternal health, child and youth health, and public health. Given the expansiveness of health data and scope of this section, this review does not provide the breadth and depth that this topic warrants, but instead, focuses on select examples: Between 2008 and 2012, over 46% of the White population with any mental illness utilized mental health services (prescription medication, outpatient services, inpatient services), while just over 41% of the American Indian* population and less than 30% of the Black or African American population with any mental illness utilized mental health services^[5]. Nationwide, Black women experience maternal mortality at a staggering rate compared to White women; in 2020, the Black maternal mortality rate was 55.3 deaths per 100,000 live births, while the White maternal mortality rate was 19.1 deaths per 100,000 live births^[6]. Within Rhode Island, the data

suggests asthma-related health disparities in children along racial lines; between 2016 and 2020, Black children visited the emergency department for asthma at a rate of 13.6 visits per 1,000 children and were hospitalized 1.9 times per 1,000 children compared to 3.3 visits and 0.55 hospitalizations per 1,000 children for White children^[7].

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HOMEOWNERSHIP DISPARITY

Summary

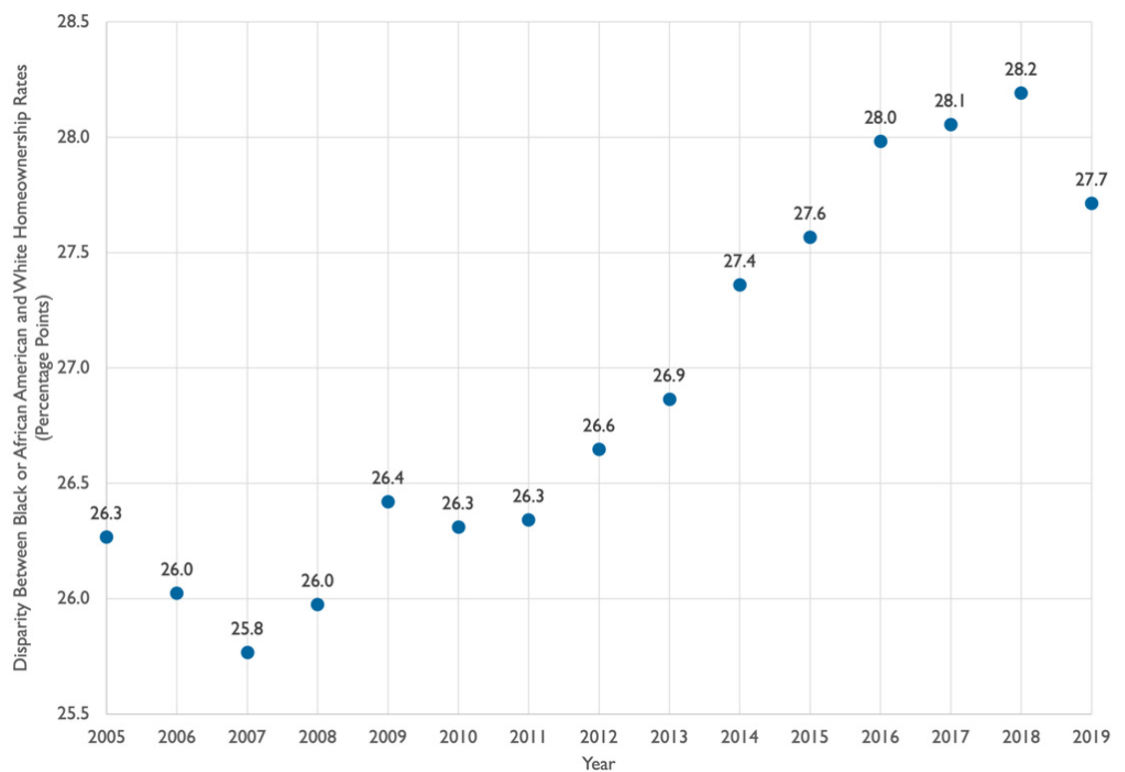
The following data review analyzes the rates of homeownership in the City of Providence, Rhode Island, and details how ownership disparities along racial lines compare to national averages. Nationwide there is a large disparity amongst home ownership between Black or African American vs their White counterparts. The State of Rhode Island and the County of Providence show similar disparities in homeownership between Black or African Americans and Whites with a 66% and 61% rate of homeownership for Whites in the State and County, respectively, and a 34% rate of homeownership for Black or African Americans in both the State and County. This data suggests that inequitable barriers contribute to the racial disparity in homeownership. These inequitable barriers include

access to mortgage loans, subprime and higher interest mortgage loans, and home appraisal values. Comparable quality homes in comparable neighborhoods are worth 23% less in majority Black or African American neighborhoods compared to those with few or no Black or African American residents, amounting to \$156 billion in cumulative losses.

Data Review

In 1960, there was a 27 percentage point disparity between Black or African American and White homeownership rates, where Black or African American homeownership was at 38% and White homeownership was at 65%^[1]. After the 1968 Fair Housing Act, Black or African American homeownership rates significantly progressed – at its peak between 2005 and 2019, Black or African American homeownership had increased 8 percentage points from its 1960 level, only to decline in 2008 during the housing crisis^{[2][3]}. Black or African American homeownership rates saw a steady decline between 2008 and 2016, and as seen in Figure 6, the decline was greater for the Black or African American population compared to the White population, furthering the racial disparity. Both White and Black or African American

Figure 6: Change in homeownership disparity between White and Black or African American populations from 2005 and 2019



homeownership rates increased between 2016 and 2019, but the Black or African American population only saw a decrease in disparity in 2019^{[2][3]}.

Recent data shows that the nationwide homeownership rate for the White population is 70%, while the Black or African American rate is 42% and the American Indian* rate is 55%^{[2][3][5]}. The State of Rhode Island and the County of Providence show similar disparities in homeownership between Black or African Americans and Whites with a 66% and 61% rate of homeownership for Whites in the State and County, respectively, and a 34% rate of homeownership for Black or African Americans in both the State and County^{[2][3]}. The homeownership rate for American Indians* is much lower than the national rate though at 20% in the State of Rhode Island and 11% in the County of Providence^[5]. City of Providence homeownership data is not available for the American Indian* population, but the homeownership rate for the Black or African American population within the City mirrors the County and State at 33%. Unlike on the national, state, and county-level though, the disparity in homeownership rates in the City is significantly less between the Black or African American and White population. Instead, the White homeownership rate in the City is significantly lower than the national, state, and county-level rate at 41% - the disparity on the city-level is 19 percentage points lower than the disparity on the county-level^{[2][3]}. As a whole, the City of Providence suffers from low levels of homeownership, despite the City's high homeowner vacancy rate (United States: 1.4; Rhode Island: 1.4; County of Providence: 1.5; City of Providence: 2.2)^[6].

The housing crisis in 2008 had significant negative impacts on the entire nation, but targeted subprime lending towards minority populations led to more severe consequences for the Black or African American household and other households of color^[4]. As mentioned above, the Black and African American population saw a slower recovery compared to the White population. In addition, by 2013, more than 2x the Black or African American homeowners who bought their homes between 2004 and 2007 lost their house to or were at risk of foreclosure compared to their White counterparts. Further effects were seen spatially, where neighborhoods with more than 50% Black or African American residents had a foreclosure rate around 25% compared to a rate around 12.5% for neighborhoods with less than 10% Black or African American residents^[4].

Inequitable barriers contribute to the racial disparity in homeownership. Comparing applicants with similar profiles, 9% of Black or African American applicants and 8% of American Indian* applicants were denied mortgage loans compared to 5% of White applicants. Further, comparing applicants with similar credit, Black or African American homebuyers continue to be pushed toward subprime and higher interest mortgage loans compared to their White counterparts^[7]. For the population that can secure homeownership, homeowners then experience devaluation: Comparable quality homes in comparable neighborhoods are worth 23% less in majority Black or African American neighborhoods compared to those with few or no Black or African American residents, amounting to \$156 billion in cumulative losses^[8].

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INCARCERATION RATES

Summary

The following data review analyzes the incarceration rates and the significant disparity along racial lines that exists in the City of Providence, Rhode Island. The data suggests that overall, the City of Providence has made strides in reduction of incarceration rates in its community, but that reduction has not been equally shared amongst races. While incarceration rates for Whites have decreased over the past 5 years, the rates for Black or African American and American Indian* have increased. This significant trend does not just apply to adult but has implication in the lives of their children. In 2020, Black or African American and American Indian* children were over 7.5 and 6 times more likely to be children of incarcerated parents compared to their White counterparts.

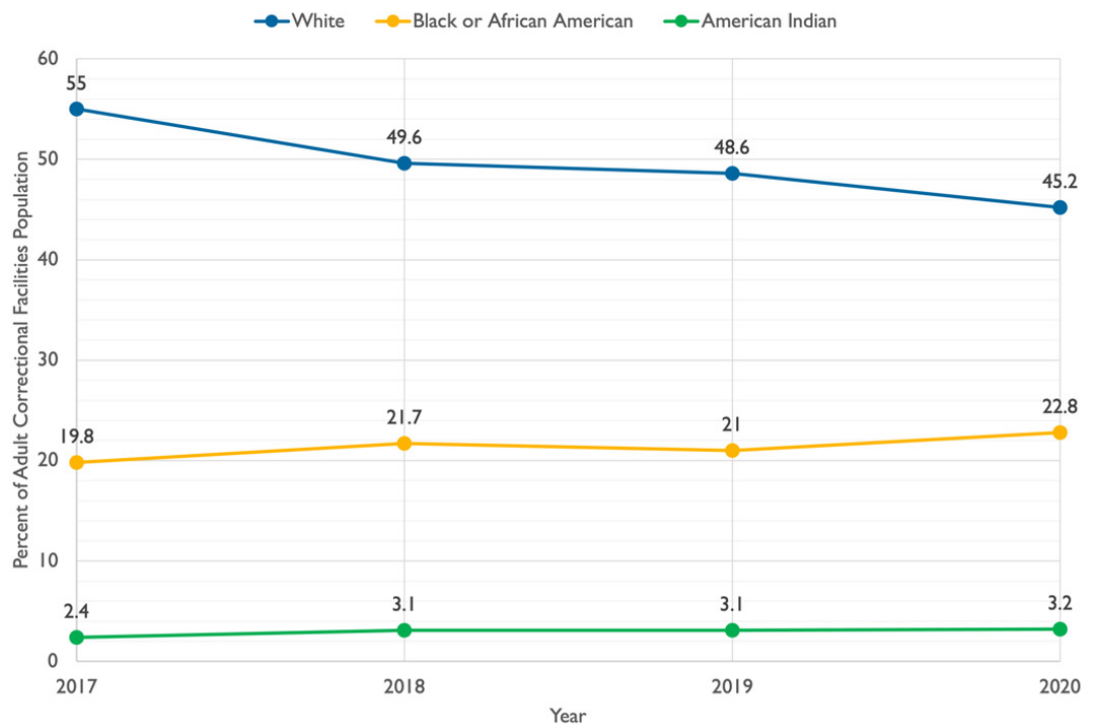
Data Review

Concerted efforts in Rhode Island to reduce its prison populations have been successful with the overall population decreasing by almost 31% between fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2019^[1]. Recent data suggests that incarceration rates in Rhode Island are the third lowest among states in the United States, but given that the United States has the highest imprisonment rate

globally, if Rhode Island were a country, it's imprisonment rate would be the 17th highest in the world^[2].

Significant racial disparities exist in the State's prison population with Black or African American and American Indian* inmates comprising a disproportionate share of the total population; While, in 2020, Rhode Island's population was comprised of 83.1% White, 6.9% Black or African American, and 0.4% American Indian*, its adult correctional facilities population was comprised of only 45.2% White, yet 22.8% Black or African American and 3.2% American Indian*^[3]. Further, the decrease in the State's prison population has not been equally shared among races. Figure 4 plots how the racial makeup of the adult correctional facilities population has changed between 2017 and 2020. While the percentage of White inmates has steadily decreased by almost 5 points, the percentage of American Indian*

Figure 4: Change in racial makeup of the adult correctional facilities population



inmates has increased by almost 1 point, and despite a dip in 2019, the percentage of Black or African American inmates has increased by 2 points^[3].

Inequities in incarceration rates are not isolated to the adult population. In 2020, Black or African American and American Indian* children were over 7.5 and 6 times more likely to be children of incarcerated parents compared to their White counterparts^[4]. Rhode Island Students also see disproportionate arrests in schools throughout Rhode Island: During the 2013-2014 school year, Rhode Island schools were comprised of 60.6% White students, 8.1% Black or African American students, and 1% American Indian* students, yet the arrests made were comprised of 53.8% White students, 18.7% Black or African American students, and 1.1% American Indian* students. Further, the population of arrests that were referred to law enforcement saw even greater disparities as only 35.8% of the population was White, while 23.7% of the population was Black or African American and 2.6% of the population was American Indian*^[5].

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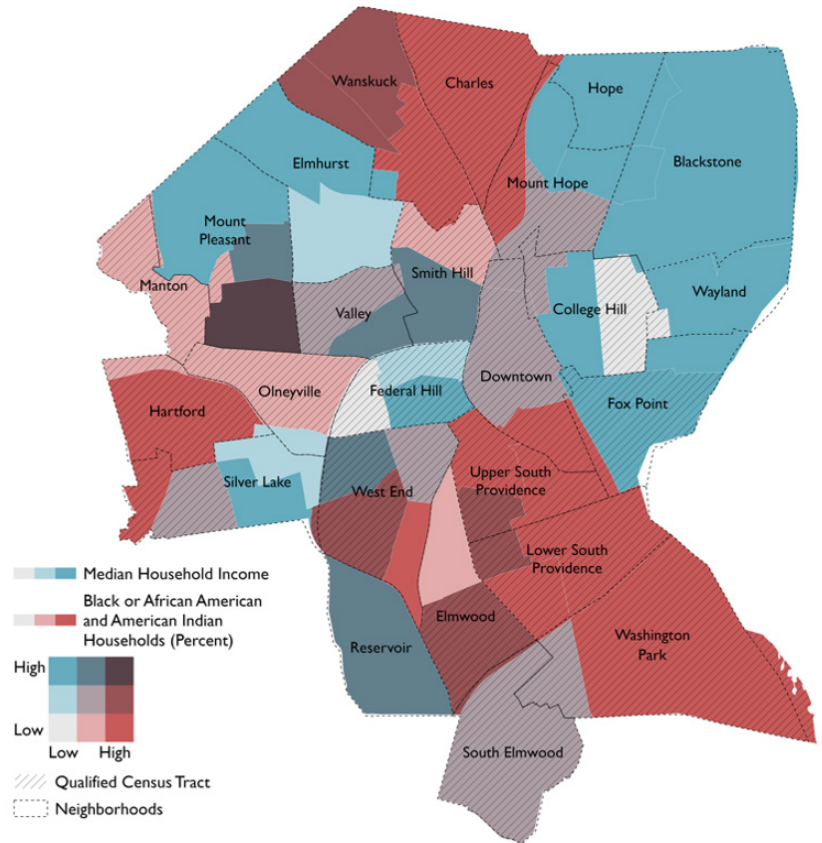
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Figure 1: Census tracts within the City of Providence mapping income disparity and prevalence of select races

INCOME DISPARITY

Summary

The following data review analyzes the income inequality and disparities in the City of Providence, Rhode Island. This review compares income inequality in the City to cities nationwide and looks at racial disparities in household income within the City. The data suggests that the City of Providence has the greatest overall income inequality and of any other city in the State of Rhode Island and one of the highest nationwide. The City also has one of the largest disparities amongst the median household income of Black or African American and American Indian* households compared to White households in the State.



Data Review

As a country, the United States has some of the highest levels of income and wealth inequality with the Federal Reserve data showing that in the first quarter of 2022, the wealthiest 10% of Americans controlled \$97.58 trillion - more than double the \$43.52 trillion held by the remaining 90% of Americans^[1]. Based on the Gini Index, a measure of income inequality, the City of Providence mirrors the national disparity; with a value of 0.5263, the City has the greatest income inequality of any city in Rhode Island and the 31st highest level of inequality of the top 500 cities in the nation by population^[2]. Within the City of Providence, the top 20% of residents hold over 55% of the aggregate household income with a mean household income of \$206,791, while the bottom 20% of residents hold less than 2.5% of the aggregate household income with a mean household income of \$9,209^{[3][4]}.

The income disparity exists across racial lines: Black or African American households in the City of Providence had a 2020 median household income of \$41,093, which was less than 76% of their White counterparts, who had a median household income of \$54,272, and the second greatest disparity within Rhode Island cities. American Indian* households in the City of Providence had a 2020 median household income of \$23,894, which was less than 45% of their White counterparts and the greatest disparity within Rhode Island cities^[5]. Figure 1 maps the relationship between median household income and percent Black or African American and American Indian* households within the City of Providence. Census tracts in red indicate areas of the City with low household median income and high percentages of Black or African American and American Indian* households. Qualified census tracts are indicated with hatches.

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POVERTY RATES

Summary

The following data review analyzes the poverty rates and racial disparities amongst the poverty rates in the City of Providence, Rhode Island. This review compares poverty rates in the City of Providence to cities nationwide and looks at the variations based on racial makeup. The data suggests that the City of Providence is one of 450 under-resourced communities within the United States, and almost 1 out of every 4 residents of the City of Providence falls below the poverty line.

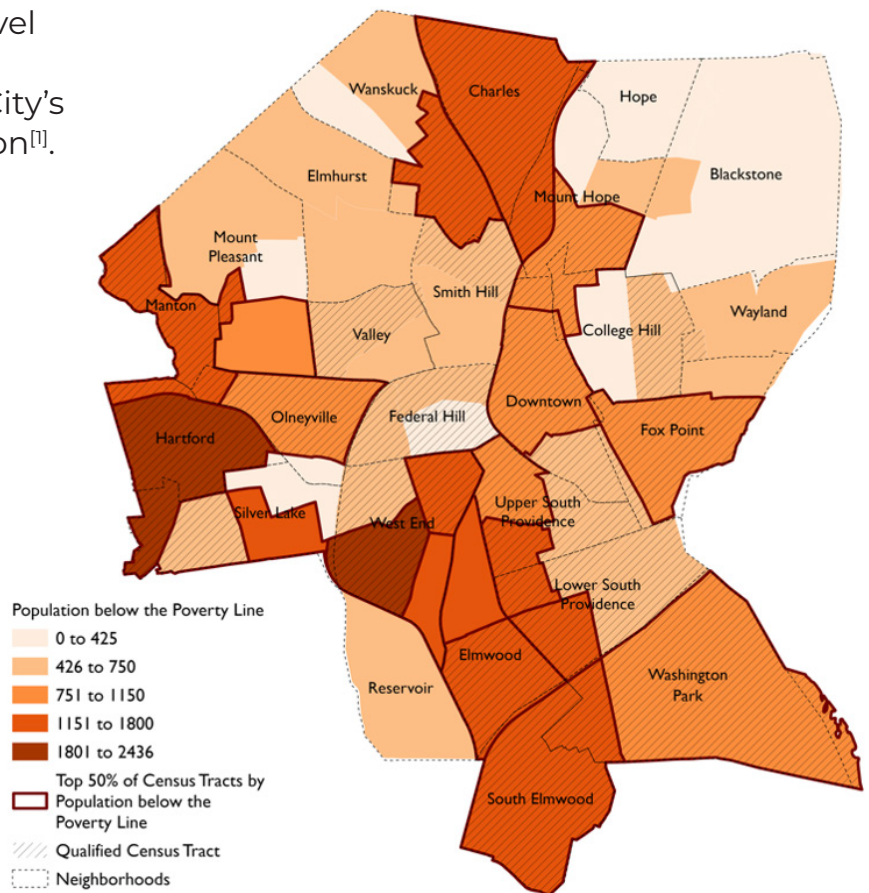
Data Review

In 2020, the City of Providence was classified as one of 450 under-resourced communities in the United States – a relatively large high-poverty, low income area, and ranked in the top 20% by level of disadvantage, where the level of disadvantage was comprised of the City's poverty rate and poverty concentration^[1]. Almost 23% of the City of Providence falls below the poverty line with almost 75% of the impoverished population residing in half of the City's census tracts^[2]. Figure 3 maps the impoverished population by census tract, highlighting the top census tracts by population below the poverty line.

The City's poverty rate is not shared equally among racial groups: less than 21% of the City's White population falls below the poverty line compared to almost 27% of the African American or Black population and over 27% of the American Indian* population^[3]

^[4]^[5]. The disparity is even larger among children with 30% of White children in the City of Providence living below the poverty line compared to almost 38% of African American or Black children and over 42% of American Indian* children living below the poverty line^[3]^[4]^[5]. Mirroring poverty rates, food assistance data shows similar inequities amongst White, African American or Black, and American Indian* households; while less than 24% of White households received food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, almost 37% of Black or African American households and over 56% of American Indian* households were enrolled in the food stamp program/ SNAP^[6].

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