

# Indianapolis Racial Equity Report Card – Public Feedback DRAFT

October 2022



*Share your thoughts on how to improve this report through our online survey:*  
<https://forms.office.com/r/5wSSWaZzyF>

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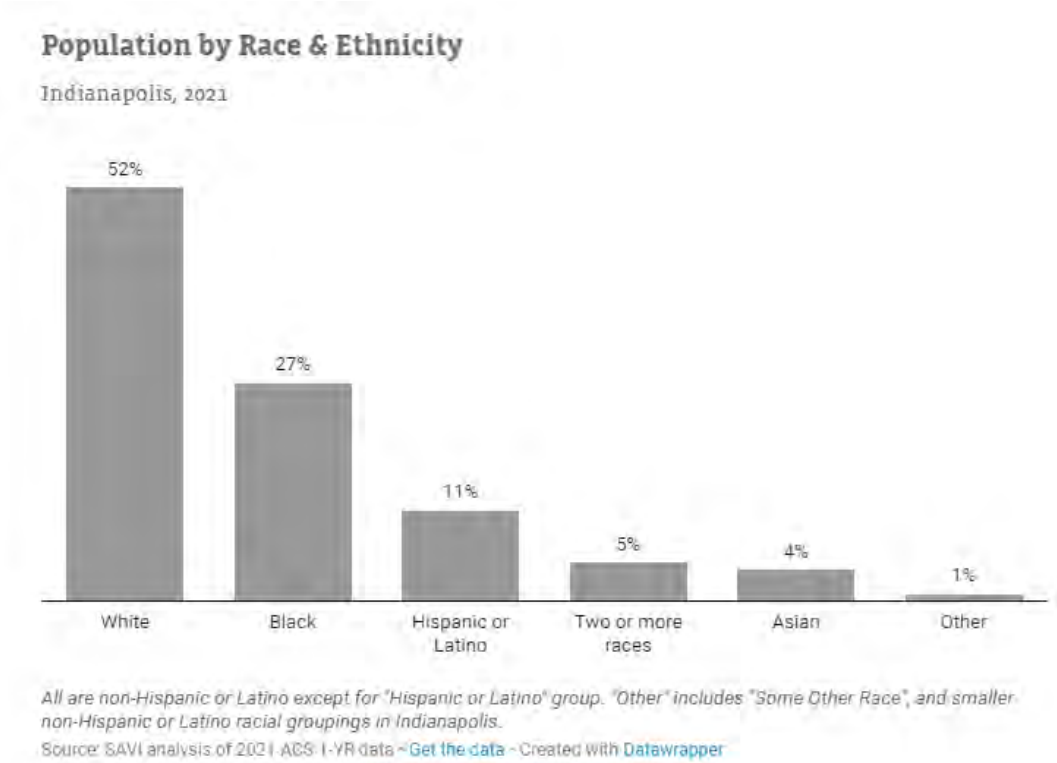
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# Introduction and Methodology

Indianapolis is a racially and ethnically diverse city. According to the 2020 Census, just over half of Indianapolis residents identify as white. The other 50 percent identify as one or many of the various racial and ethnic identities that make up our neighborhoods and communities.

These populations of color are growing quickly. For example, people identifying as two or more races increased by 191% in the last decade, following national trends. Furthermore, the [National Equity Atlas projects](#) that around 70 percent of Marion County residents will be non-white by 2050, one of the highest projected percentages for any county in the Midwest. Some of this growth has been driven by an increase in the number of people selecting multiple races on census forms, but growth has also been strong among people who identify as Black, Hispanic, or Asian.

[This is a link to a survey](#) where you can provide your input on both the indicators you see tracked below or potential indicators that have not yet been considered. Thank you for providing feedback!



As with most diverse communities in America, significant disparities have developed over time. Historic [racist redlining policies](#), “White Flight”, inequitable resource allocation, and more have all contributed to a situation where race is a

dividing between “haves” and “have-nots” on many important indicators. This project is an attempt to track those disparities over time to both shine a light on the many areas for improvement but also the areas where progress has been made.

The draft “Racial Equity Report Card” that follows is divided into seven sections, each highlighting a key indicator, important drivers, and other important indicators. Each section also features further research and solutions from our own community and nationally. Indicators were chosen and prioritized based on feedback from community members, city leaders, and The Polis Center. During this draft phase of the Report Card, we are seeking feedback from as many Indianapolis residents as possible on what measures you think should be tracked. [This is a link to a survey](#) where you can provide your input on both the indicators you see tracked below or potential indicators that have not yet been considered. In addition to online feedback, we will be participating in community meetings and public events to invite more input. Once the feedback process is complete, indicators will be set and data will be updated annually.

For every measure, we highlight the equity gap between racial groups. While these indicators are not always highest for White individuals, we consistently use the White population as a reference point because of the historic social and political dominance of Whiteness in American history. Outcomes for White residents are compared to every other racial group present in the data ranked from most to least optimal outcome.

For positive measures, like income and life expectancy, this is the White-to-Non-White ratio for the indicator. For negative measures, like environmental risk or poverty, this is the Non-White-to-White ratio. A higher ratio always represents a worse disparity for Non-White individuals. A measure with no equity gap would have a 1.0 ratio.

### Measuring race and ethnicity is complicated.

SAVI reports tend to examine races and ethnicities as distinct demographic groups. This is useful and does relate to some of the ways that race is constructed and thought of in society. However, the census allows people to select multiple races and write in additional races.

Separating people into distinct groups can mask this complexity. A report like this, focused on Black-White equity gaps, naturally compares statistics for Black and White populations. But even these groups are not clear: There are 20,000 people who identify as both Black and White in the 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Hispanic or Latino is not considered a race, but is instead an ethnicity that can be selected in addition to someone’s race. Throughout this report we label charts and equity gaps with “Hispanic or Latino” whenever possible to describe this group. This is to keep in line with standard census definitions. When some data sources deviate and use “Hispanic” or “Latino” individually, we use those labels to mirror the data source. Since there is deviation between data sources, “Hispanic” is used as a catch-all term to improve readability in some narrative portions of this report.

## Key Indicators Summary

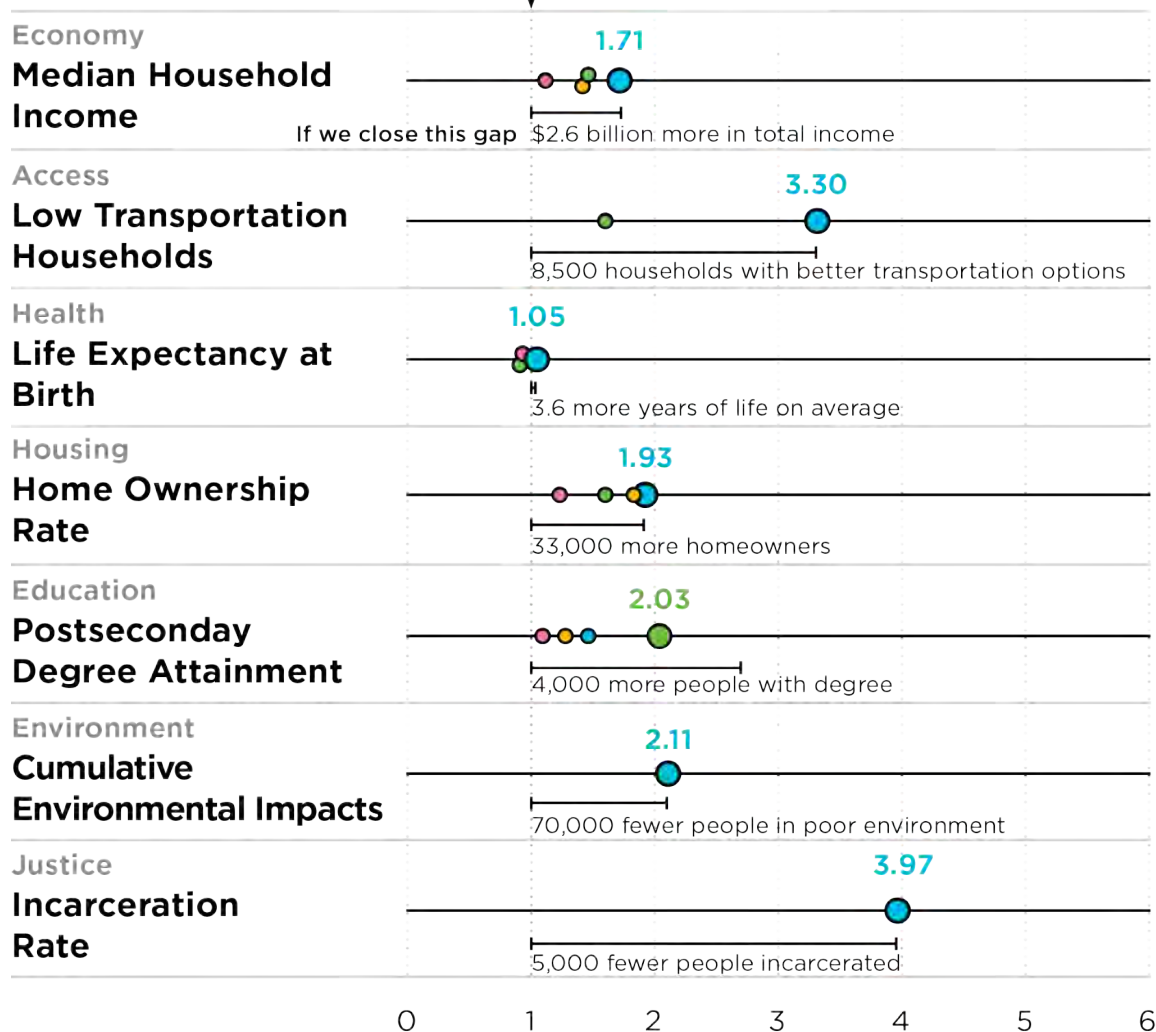
Below you can see every key indicator we have identified so far along with their largest equity gap score. Some indicators have much larger equity gaps than others. Viewing all indicators next to one another allows community leaders to prioritize action where gaps are the largest. The largest gap is between White and Black residents for the overwhelming majority of indicators.

### Equity gaps

Ratio of statistic for White residents compared to those who identify as \_\_\_\_\_

● Black ● Hispanic or Latino ● Asian ● Two or more races

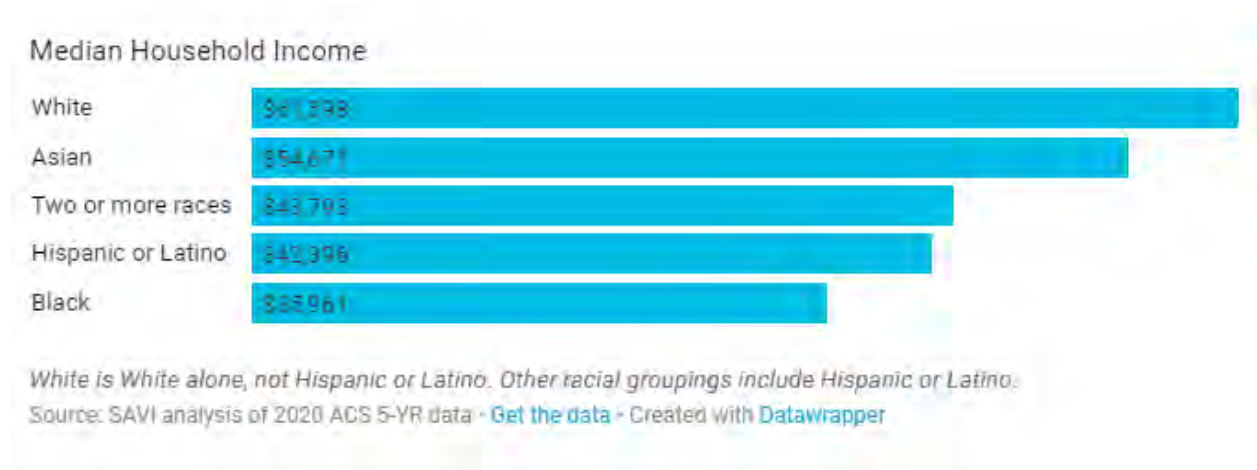
Better outcome compared to White ← Equal outcomes → Worse outcome compared to White



## Economy

### Median Household Income (Key Indicator)

White households make over \$26,000 more than Black families per year in Indianapolis. Hispanic households make about \$20,000 less on average than White households. When gaps like this persist over long periods of time, they contribute to the overall wealth gap between White and non-white families in America. In 2020, the [Brookings Institution](#) found that the average Black family's net worth was ten times less than the average White family.



### Equity Gaps:

Black – White 1.71

Hispanic or Latino – White 1.45

Multiracial – White 1.41

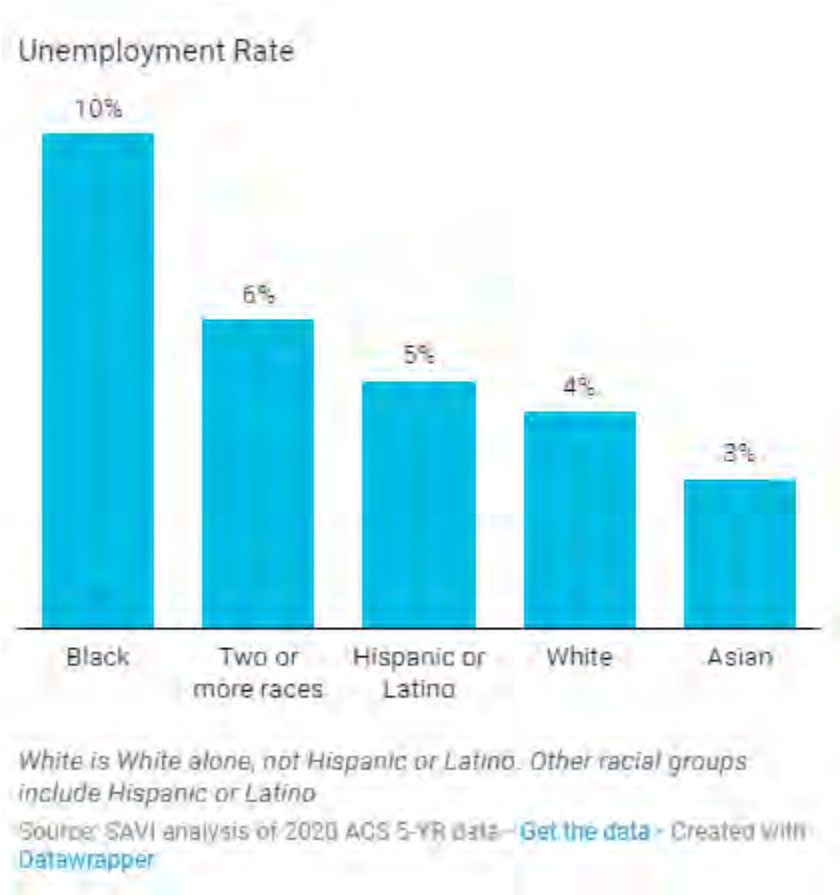
Asian – White 1.12

### Closing the Equity Gap

The typical White household make 1.71 times the income of the typical Black household. If Black households earned the same amount as White households, that would be an additional \$26,000 for over 100,000 households, resulting in \$2.6 billion in additional income across Indianapolis.

## Unemployment Rate (Driver of Median Household Income)

Overall unemployment can vary widely from year-to-year based on macroeconomic conditions. However, there has been a long-standing racial gap in unemployment rates regardless of the current situation. Black workers in Indianapolis are unemployed at twice the rate of White residents.



### Equity Gaps:

Black – White 2.29

Multiracial – White: 1.43

Hispanic or Latino – White: 1.14

Asian – White: 0.69

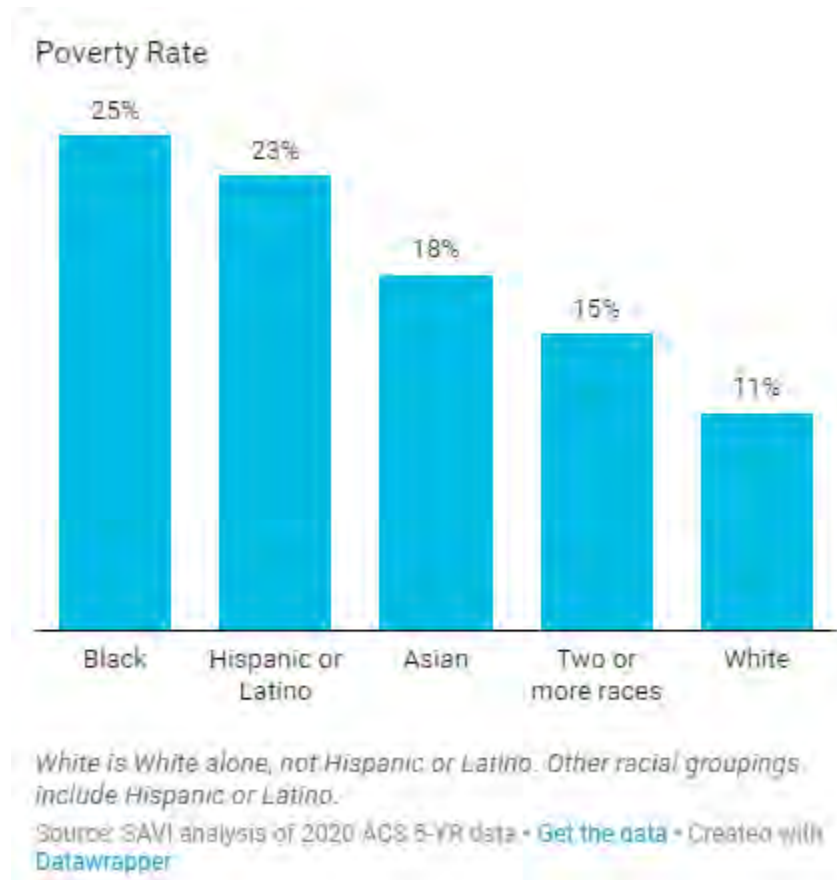
### Closing the Equity Gap

If unemployment rates were equal for White, Black, Hispanic, and multiracial workers, that would result in over 7,500 additional employed workers.



## Poverty Rate (Related to Median Household Income)

Despite [decades of progress](#) nationwide in reducing overall poverty rates since they began being tracked in the 1960's, large racial gaps persist. Additionally, Black and Hispanic residents in Indianapolis have higher poverty rates than the national average. Asian residents also have a much higher poverty rate on average than White residents in our city.



### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 2.22

Hispanic or Latino – White: 2.06

Asian – White: 1.59

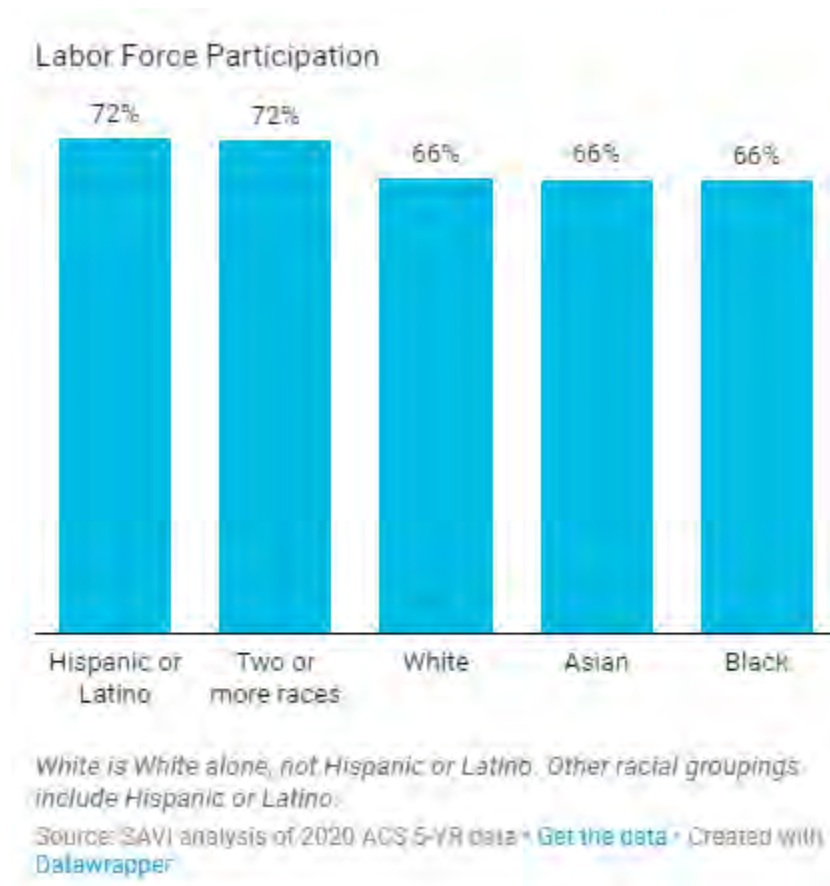
Multiracial – White: 1.38

### Closing the Equity Gap

If poverty rates were equal for Hispanic individuals, that would result in nearly 12,000 fewer people in poverty.

## Labor Force Participation (Driver of Median Household Income)

The combination of the labor force participation rate and median household income tell an interesting story. Black labor force participation is the same as White and Asian, while Hispanic participation is much higher. However, household income gaps remain wide between races because different jobs come with different salaries. A job is not enough to build wealth. Disparities in the quality of jobs are also very important.



### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 1.0

Hispanic or Latino – White: 0.92

Asian – White: 1.0

Multiracial – White: 0.92

This is a rare instance that several groups have more favorable outcomes than White residents.

## Access

### Transportation Access (Transit + Car) – Key Indicator

An estimated 12,200 Black households are without a car and live outside high-transit neighborhoods, compared to 8,200 White households. High-transit neighborhoods are census tracts with more than 1,000 revenue miles of transit service per square mile according to [SAVI's transit density measure](#). One fourth of census tracts meet that threshold.



### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 3.30

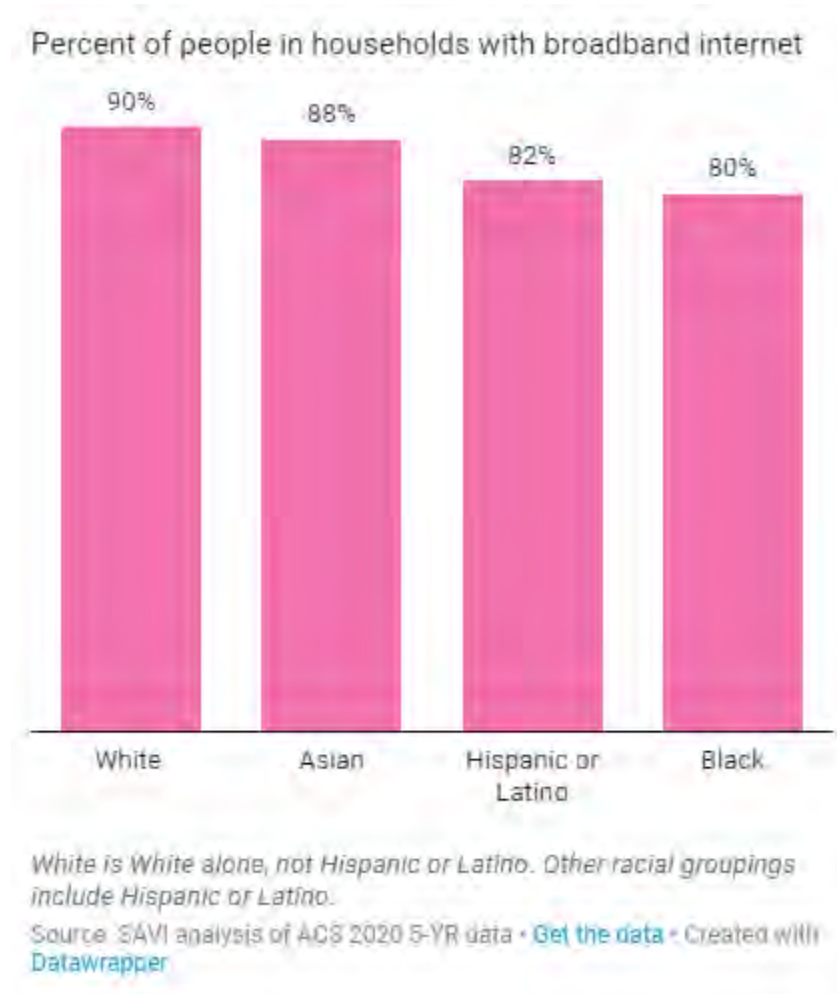
Hispanic or Latino – White: 1.60

### Closing the Equity Gap

Black households are 3.3 times as likely as White households to be without a car and live outside a transit-rich neighborhood. If this rate were equal for Black households, that would result in 8,500 households with better transportation options.

## Broadband Internet Access (Other Access Indicator)

Access to a reliable internet connection is key to succeeding in today's online economy. Additionally, students need an internet connection to complete assignments and to research higher education opportunities. Despite recent efforts to expand broadband in Indiana, residents of color are still less likely to have access, even in a big city like Indianapolis.



### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 1.12

Hispanic or Latino – White: 1.10

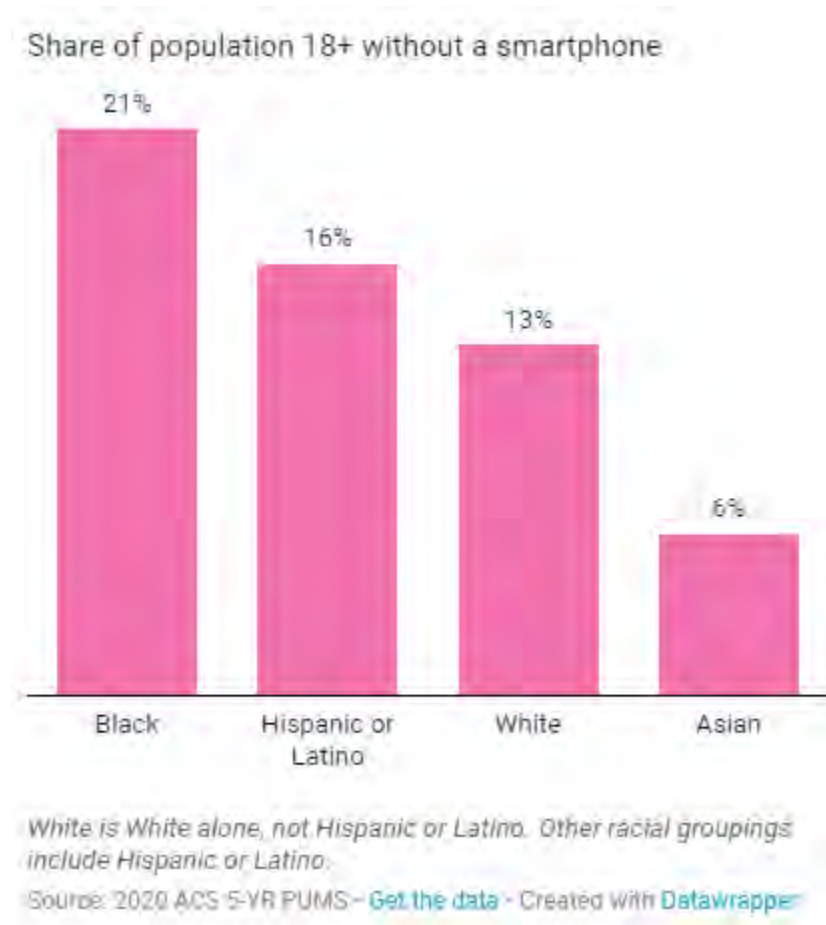
Asian – White: 1.02

### Closing the Equity Gap

If internet access were equal for Hispanic households, that would result in 8,000 more households with broadband internet at home.

## Smartphone Access (Related to Internet Access)

Internet access at home is important, but desktop and laptop computers can be cost prohibitive for lower income people. A smartphone can be a cheaper way to access the internet both at home or using free public wifi. In Indianapolis, Black and Hispanic residents are less likely to have a smartphone than White and Asian residents.



### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 1.62

Hispanic or Latino – White: 1.43

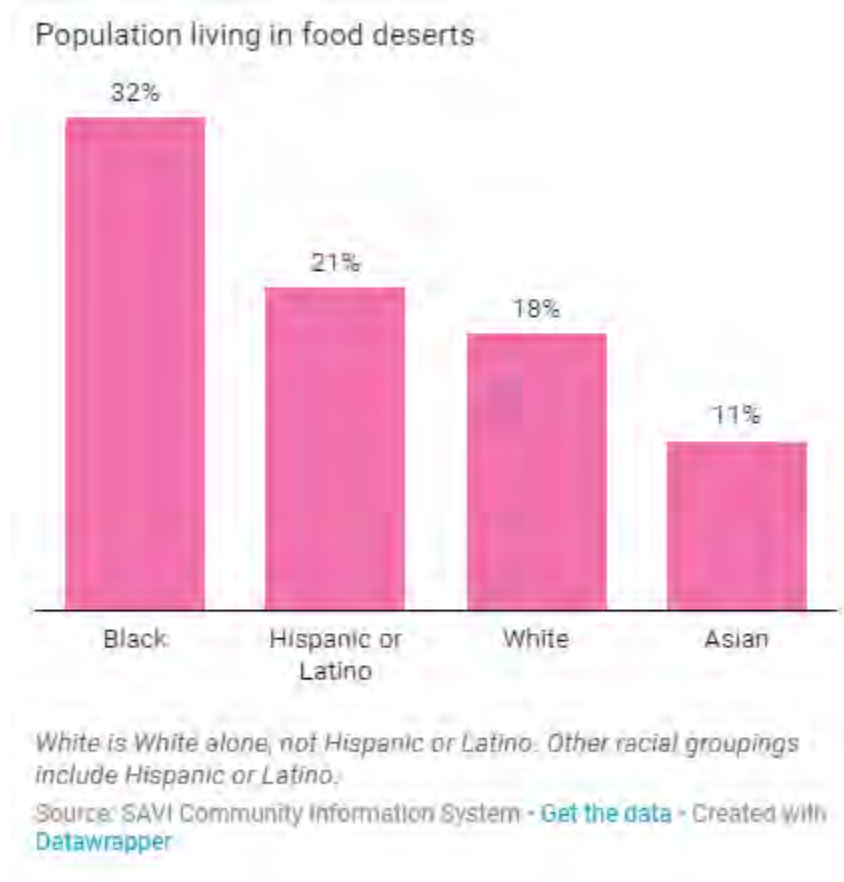
Asian – White: 0.46

### Closing the Equity Gap

If smartphone access were equal for Black individuals, that would result in 13,000 more people with a smartphone.

## Population Living in a Food Desert (Other Access Indicator)

Without access to fresh food, living a healthy lifestyle can be very difficult. Some people live in “food deserts”, meaning that there is no reliable grocery option within a reasonable travel distance from home. When looking at the most racially segregated areas of Indianapolis, there is a stark difference in the share of people living in a food desert.



### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 1.78

Hispanic or Latino – White: 1.17

Asian – White: 0.61

### Closing the Equity Gap

If Black individuals lived in food deserts at the same rate as White individuals, that would result in over 32,000 more people with access to health food.

## Health

### Life Expectancy (Key Indicator)

Average life expectancy can vary widely within a city based on many different factors. For example, some Census tracts have life expectancies well above 80 years while others are well below 70. When looking at the whole city by race, Black residents have the lowest life expectancy by far followed by White residents. What may surprise you is that Latino residents have the highest average life expectancy, which [follows national trends](#).

### Equity Gaps

Black – White: 1.05

Latino – White: 0.91

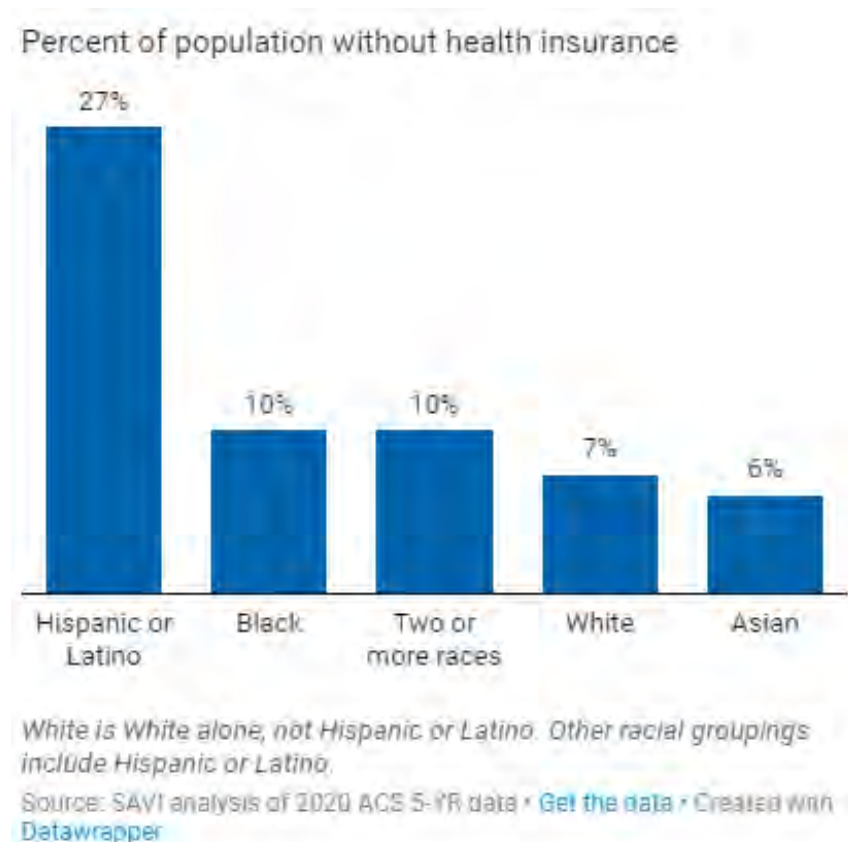
API – White: 0.92

### Closing the Equity Gap

If life expectancy were equal for Black and White residents, that would result in an average of 3.6 additional years of life for over 265,000 people, a total of almost 1,000,000 years of life.

## Health Insurance Access (Driver of Life Expectancy)

Not everyone in the United States has access to health insurance or reliable, high-quality healthcare. Federal programs like Medicare and Medicaid provide health insurance to older and lower income residents. **However, people without citizenship cannot always access those programs.** As a result, Hispanic residents have the highest uninsured rate since many are immigrants without citizenship.



### Equity Gaps

Hispanic or Latino – White: 3.93

Black – White: 1.38

Asian – White: 1.38

Multiracial – White: 0.85

### Closing the Equity Gap

If insurance rates were equal between Hispanic and White residents, that would result in 20,000 more people with insurance coverage.



## Diabetes (Driver of Life Expectancy)

**Race, poverty, and place** all interact to create disparities in both the incidence of diabetes in certain populations and deaths from the disease. In Indianapolis, Black residents are much more likely to die from diabetes than White residents.

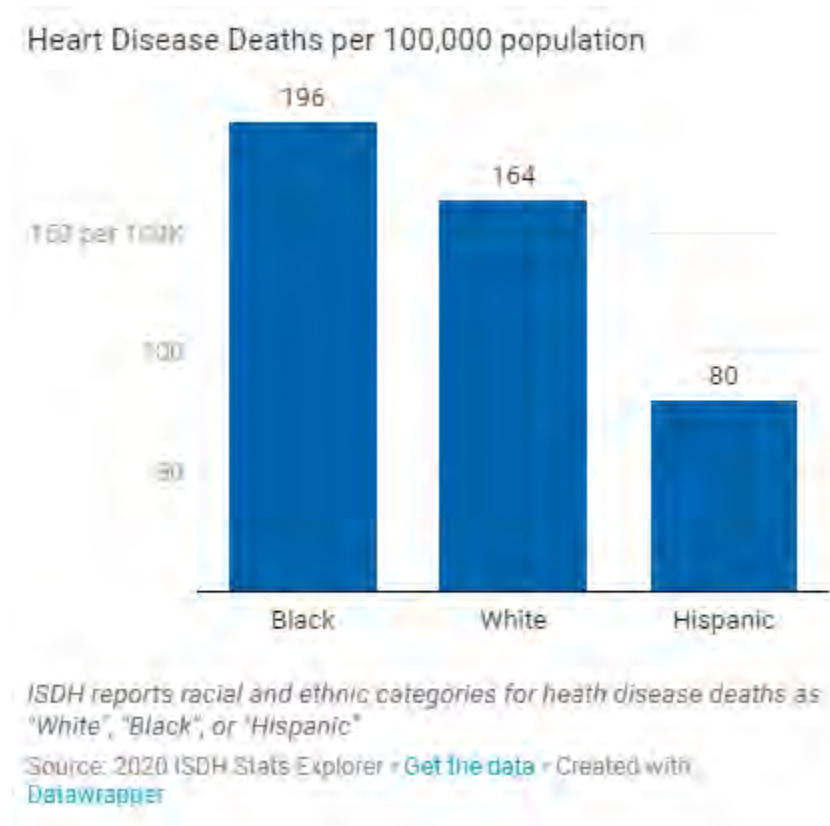
**Black-White Equity Gap: 1.69**

### **Closing the Equity Gap**

If the diabetes death rate were equal between Black and White residents, that would result in 53 fewer deaths.

## Heart Disease (Driver of Life Expectancy)

Nationally, [heart disease is more prevalent](#) among White Americans yet Black Americans are still more likely to die from the disease. Here in Indianapolis, Black residents are most likely to die from heart disease.



### Equity Gaps:

Black-White Gap: 1.20

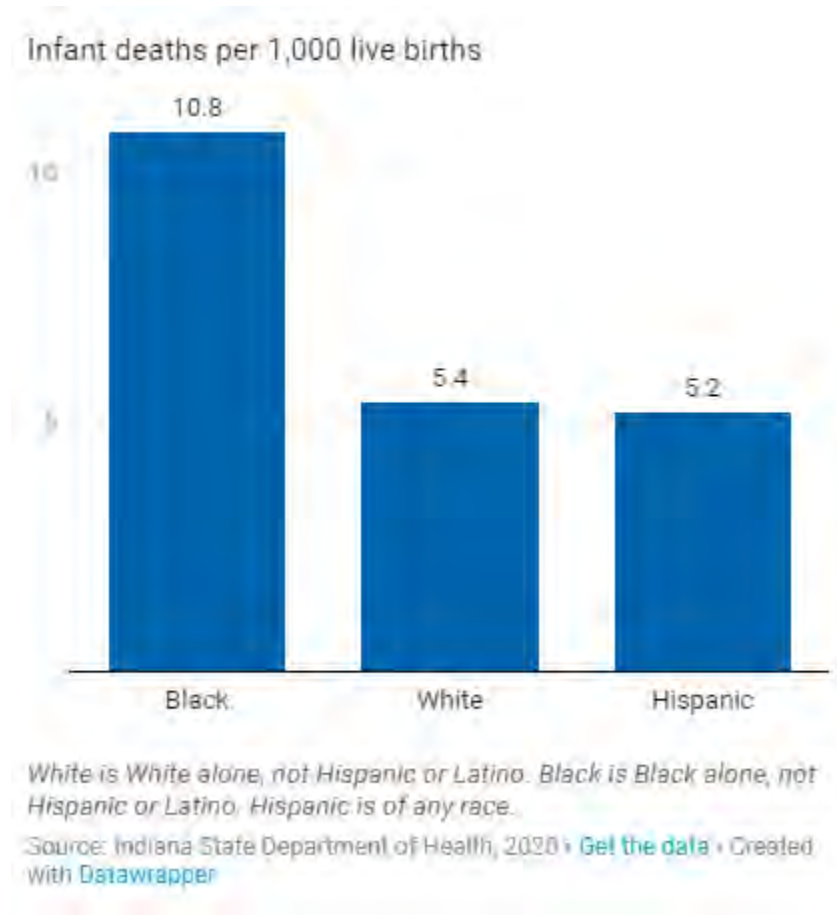
Hispanic-White Gap: 0.49

### Closing the Equity Gap

If death rates from heart disease were equal across White and Black populations, that would result in 85 fewer deaths.

## Infant Mortality (Driver of Life Expectancy)

Environmental factors and substandard health care can lead to the tragedy of an infant death. In Indianapolis, Black infants are twice as likely to die compared to White or Hispanic infants.



### Equity Gaps:

Black-White Gap: 2.0

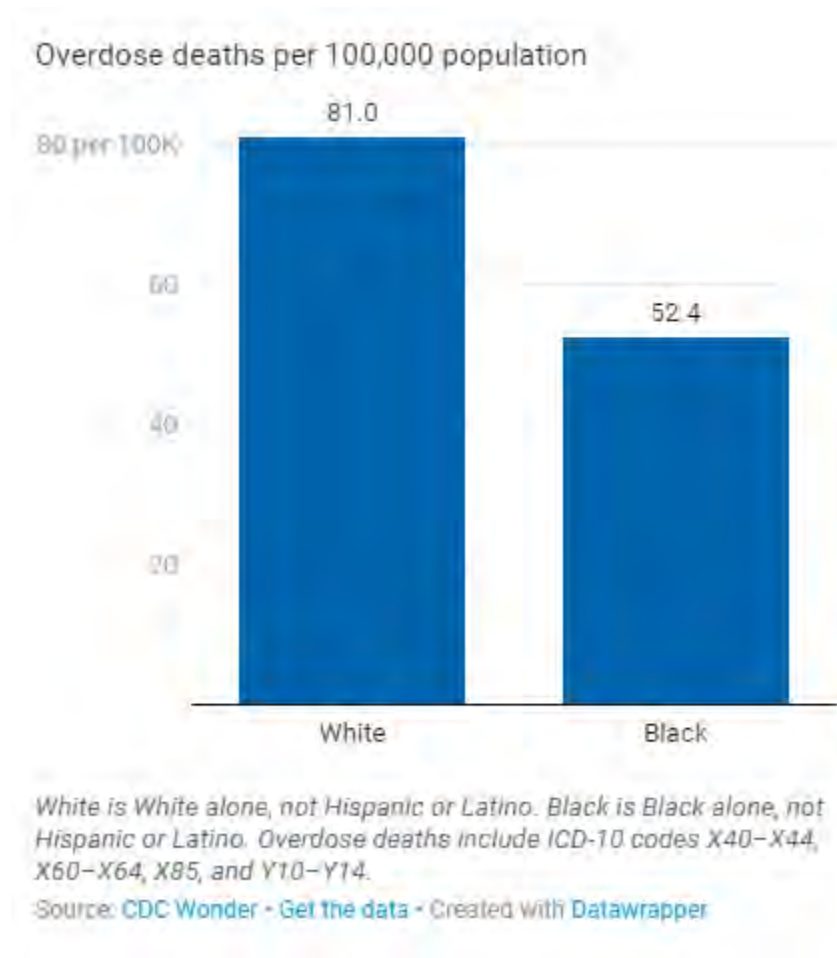
Hispanic-White Gap: 0.96

### Closing the Equity Gap

If infant mortality rates were equal for Black and White babies, the result would be 25 fewer infant deaths in 2020.

## Drug Overdose Deaths (Driver of Life Expectancy)

Throughout the last decade, life expectancy has fallen slightly, and drug overdose deaths, specifically opioid overdoses, [are responsible](#) for a portion of this decline. In 2020, 152 Black residents died from an overdose compared to 426 White residents. Data about other races and ethnicities was too small to be reliable.



### Black-White Equity Gap: 0.65

The overdose death rate is lower for Black individuals than for White individuals, according to CDC (Centers for Disease Control) estimates.

## Housing

### Homeownership Rate (Key Indicator)

Homeownership is the key to economic stability and wealth generation for many families in the United States. Inequitable rates of homeownership between racial groups create unbalanced wealth accumulation that exacerbates pre-existing disparities.

Two thirds of White households own their home, compared to half of Asian households, 40 percent of Hispanic, and just one third of Black households.

### Equity Gaps

Black - White: 1.93

Multiracial - White: 1.74

Hispanic or Latino - White: 1.61

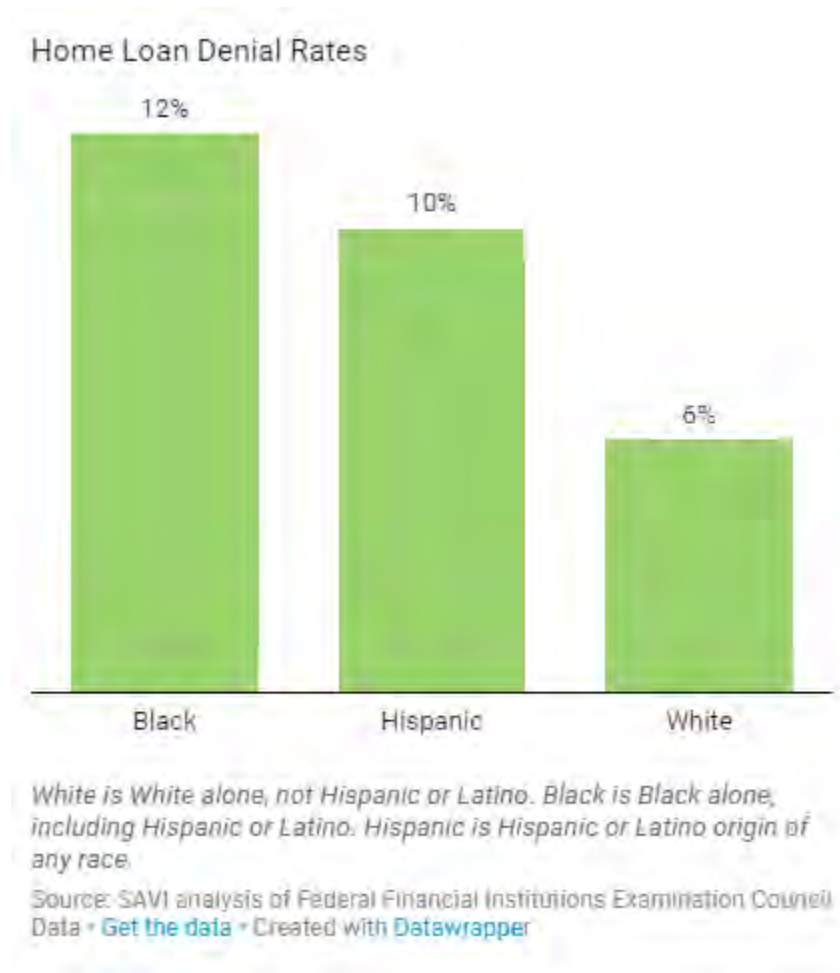
Asian - White: 1.24

### Closing the Equity Gap

If homeownership rates were equal between White and Multiracial households, that would result in 3,000 more homeowner households. Since the median equity U.S. households have in their own home is \$118,000 ([Census](#)), that could be \$339 million in wealth for those households.

## Home Loan Denial Rates (Driver of Homeownership Rate)

For most people, if you can't get a loan you can't buy a home. Despite decades of progress in eliminating discrimination from housing practices in the U.S., [recent SAVI research](#) determined that residents of color are still significantly more likely to have their home loan applications denied, even when controlling for other important variables.



### Equity Gaps

Black - White: 2.0

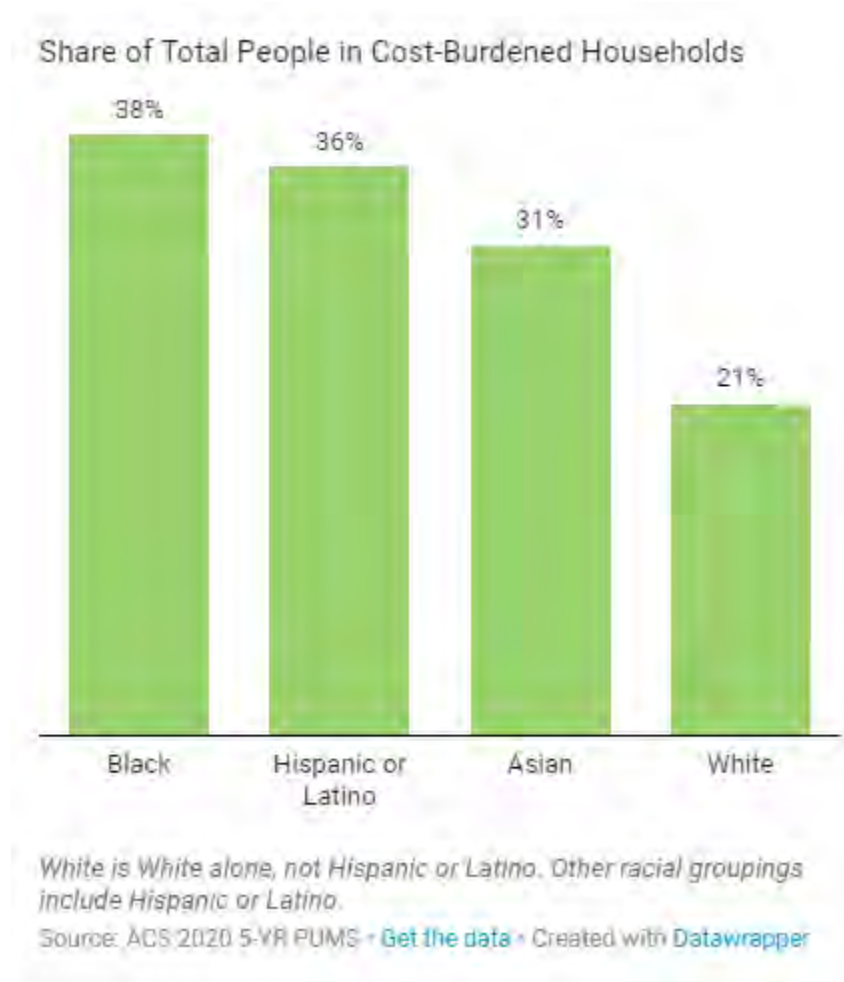
Hispanic - White: 1.66

### Closing the Equity Gap

If home loan denial rates were equal between Black and White borrowers, this would result in over 200 more approved loans for Black borrowers each year.

## Housing Cost Burden (Driver of Homeownership Rate)

Even among those who are able to buy a home, the experience is uneven depending on their income level. A person is considered "cost-burdened" if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. As we have seen with other economic indicators, higher levels of income for White families put them in a much more stable situation.



### Equity Gaps

Black - White: 1.81

Hispanic or Latino - White: 1.71

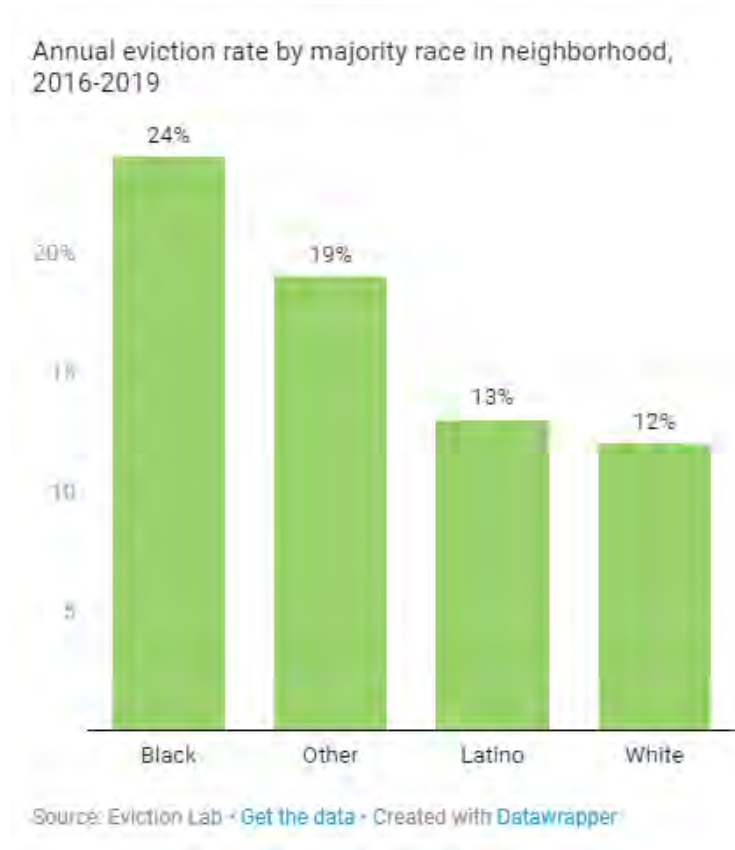
Asian - White: 1.48

### Closing the Equity Gap

If housing cost burden was equal between Asian and White individuals, the result would be 3,000 fewer people living in housing cost burdened households.

## Eviction Filing Rate (Other Housing Indicator)

Eviction filing rates are twice as high in majority Black neighborhoods as in majority White neighborhoods. The [effects of eviction](#) can be significant and long-lasting, resulting in the personal loss of possessions, neighborhood community, and children's schools, while increasing childhood trauma, negative health outcomes, and stress. Even an eviction filing that does not result in an eviction can [hurt a tenant's prospects](#) for finding a new apartment.



### Equity Gaps

Black - White: 2.09

Other - White: 1.60

Latino - White: 1.09

### Closing the Equity Gap

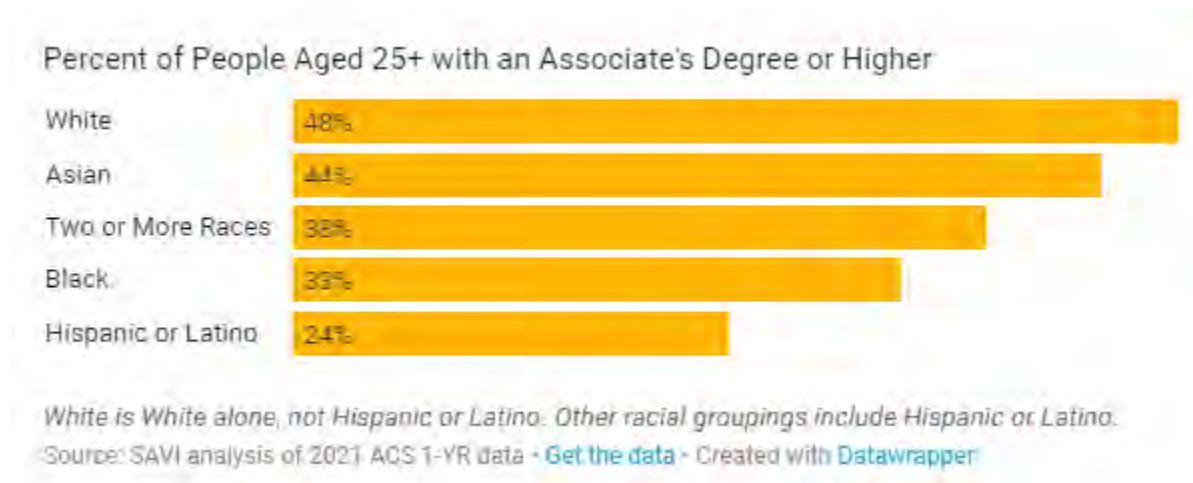
If eviction rates in neighborhoods where most people were multiracial were equal to those in majority White neighborhoods, the result would be nearly 2,600 fewer evictions each year for people of all races.



## Education

### Postsecondary Degree Attainment (Key Indicator)

Rather than look only at traditional four-year bachelor's degrees, this report card focuses on a more inclusive educational attainment metric. Graduating with any sort of college degree has major economic benefits like increased earnings over a worker's lifespan. This metric captures everyone who has earned at least an associate's degree up through those with post-graduate degrees. In addition to associate's degrees, post-secondary credentials and training are in some cases the best option for people. However, data about these education options are limited.



### Equity Gaps

Hispanic or Latino - White: 2.03

Black - White: 1.46

Multiracial - White: 1.28

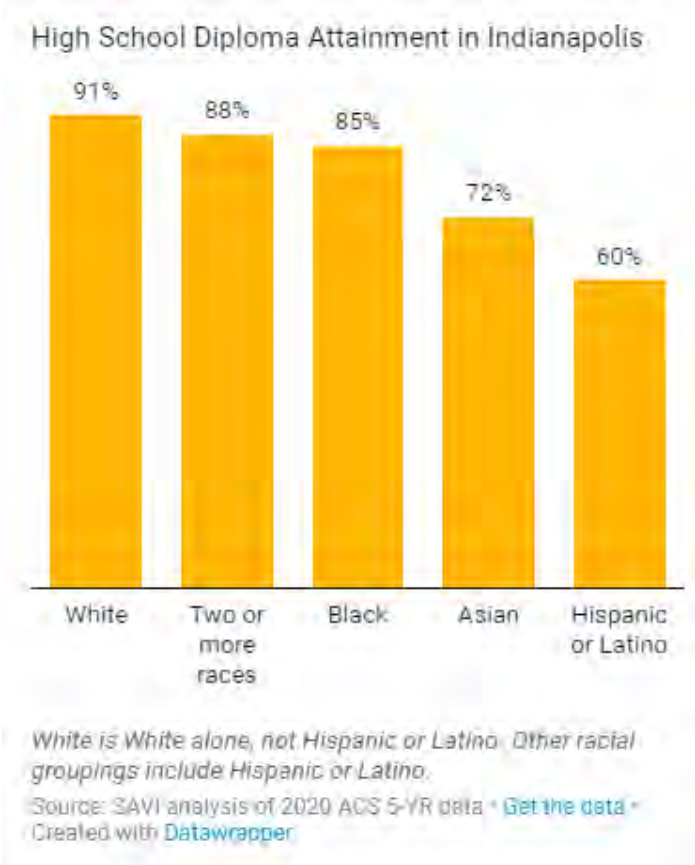
Asian - White: 1.09

### Closing the Equity Gap

If Multiracial adults had degrees at the same rate as White adults, that would result in 4,000 more people with at least an associate's degree.

## High School Diploma Attainment (Driver of Postsecondary Degree Attainment)

College is important, but it's not for everyone. There are still good jobs available for those with only a high school diploma, however the large gap in diploma attainment creates an unrepresentative applicant pool. Hispanic residents have particularly low levels of high school education in Indianapolis compared to other groups.



### Equity Gaps

Hispanic or Latino - White: 1.54

Asian - White: 1.27

Multiracial - White: 1.07

Black - White: 1.04

### Closing the Equity Gap

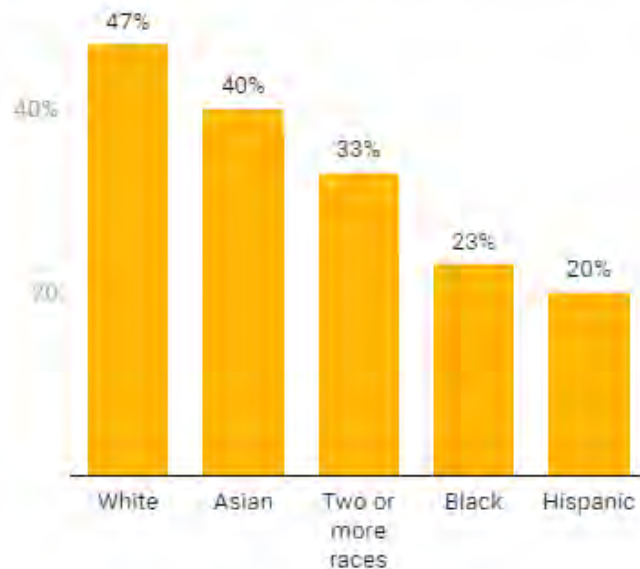
If Asian adults had high school diplomas at the same rate as White adults, that would result in 4,000 more people with a diploma. Because someone with a diploma earns \$5,000 per year than someone without, that could equate to as much as \$21 million in additional earnings across Indianapolis.

## Access to Quality Choice Schools (Driver of degree attainment)

Almost half of White elementary or middle school IPS students are enrolled in one of the districts quality choice schools. Only one quarter of Black students are enrolled in these schools. These schools include Center For Inquiry School 2, Center for Inquiry School 27, Center for Inquiry School 70, Center for Inquiry School 84, Cold Spring School, Edison School of the Arts 47, Ernie Pyle School 90, George Washington Carver School 87, HW Longfellow Med/STEM Magnet Middle School, IPS/Butler Lab at Eliza Blaker 55, IPS/Butler Lab at William Bell 60, Merle Sidener Gifted Academy, Theodore Potter School 74.

Hispanic Students are enrolled at an even lower rate than Black students at these particular schools.

Percent of PK-8 IPS students enrolled at quality IPS choice school



Quality schools = state letter grade of C or better

Source: SAVI analysis of data from Indiana Department of Education and Indianapolis Public Schools • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

### Equity Gaps

Hispanic - White: 2.31

Black - White: 2.02

Multiracial - White: 1.42

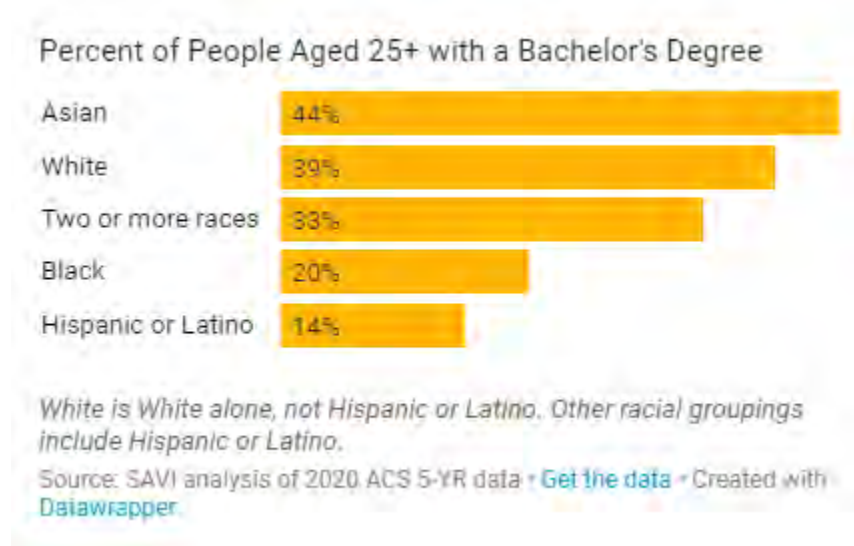
Asian - White: 1.16

### Closing the Equity Gap

If Hispanic students were enrolled in IPS' quality, choice primary and intermediate schools at the same rate as White students, that would result in nearly 1,600 children each year enrolled with access to these schools.

## Bachelor's Degree Attainment (Other Education Indicator)

Despite recent national conversations on the value of a college degree in today's economy, the fact remains that a degree **usually leads to greater economic success**. Higher bachelor's degree attainment levels among Asian and White residents are key drivers behind higher median incomes for those groups.



### Equity Gaps

Hispanic or Latino - White: 2.70

Black - White: 1.98

Multiracial - White: 1.17

Asian - White: 0.88

### Closing the Equity Gap

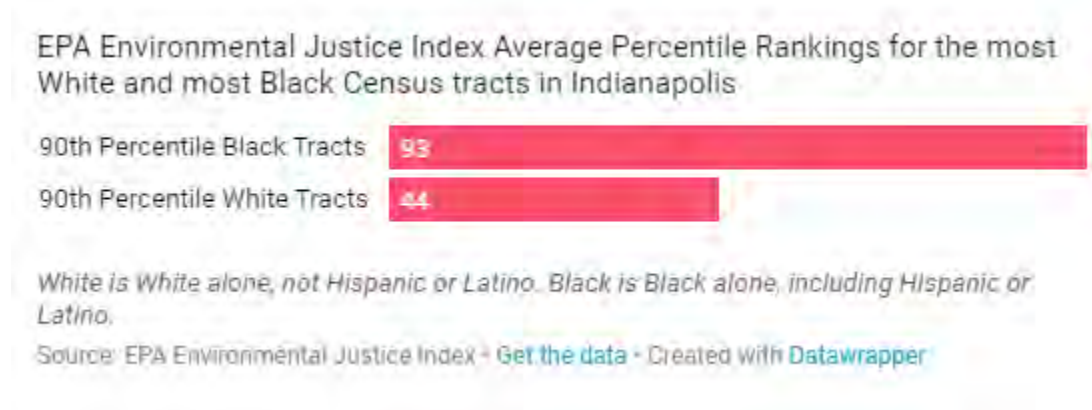
If Hispanic adults had bachelor's degrees at the same rate as White adults, that would result in 12,000 more people with a bachelor's degree. Because someone with a bachelor's degree earns \$20,000 per year than someone with just a high school diploma, that could equate to as much as \$236 million in additional earnings across Indianapolis.

# Environment

## Cumulative Environmental Impacts (Key Indicator)

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Justice Index (EJI) attempts to show the cumulative affects of environmental hazards (like air pollution) at a local level. The Index tells you what percentage of Census tracts around the country likely have worse environmental hazards than the tract in question.

On average, the most White tracts in Indianapolis have worse environmental impacts than 44% of tracts nationwide. The most Black tracts have worse impacts than 93% of such areas nationwide.



## Black-White Equity Gap: 2.11

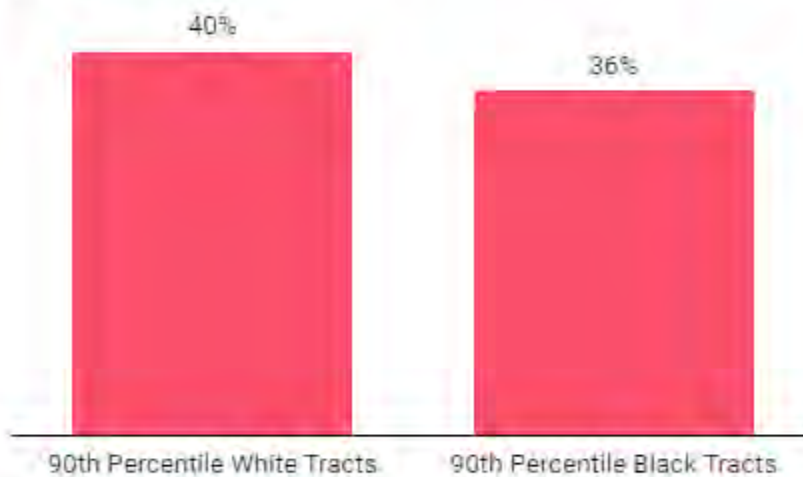
### Closing the Equity Gap

If these communities of color had the same environmental conditions as White communities, that would result in 70,000 people no longer living in poor environmental conditions, including 52,000 Black residents and 9,000 White residents.

## Tree Canopy Cover (Driver of Cumulative Environmental Impacts)

Some research theorizes that [exposure to greenspace and trees in urban environments](#) is linked to physical and mental health outcomes. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful tracks tree coverage in the city allowing us to estimate racial disparities. The average tree canopy cover in the most White areas of the city is 40% while just 36% in the most Black areas.

Average Tree Canopy Cover as a percent of total land area in the most White and most Black Census tracts in Indianapolis.



*White is White alone, not Hispanic or Latino. Black is Black alone, including Hispanic or Latino.*

Source: 2015 Keep Indianapolis Beautiful • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

**Black-White Equity Gap: 1.09**

### Closing the Equity Gap

This is one of the smaller equity gaps among all the indicators examined. Still, if this were equal across races, that would result in 70,000 people with improved tree canopy.

## Justice

### Incarceration Rate (Key Indicator)

The total incarceration rate, including people in jail and prison, is much higher for Black residents of Marion County than for White residents. The latest data available at the county level for jail and prison rates is 2016. At that time, Marion County's incarceration rate was lower than the national rate. Our incarceration gap was slightly lower than the national rate: the Black incarceration is 4.0 times higher than White in Marion County and 4.2 times higher in the nation overall.



**Black-White Equity Gap: 3.97**

#### Closing the Equity Gap

This is one of the largest equity gaps among all the indicators examined. If Black residents were incarcerated at the same rate as White residents, that would lead to over 5,000 people living in their communities rather than incarcerated.

## Jail Incarceration Rate (Driver of Incarceration Rate)

The [Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative](#) began in Marion County in 2006 and has dramatically reduced the number of juvenile charges in our city. Still, a large racial remains among those that are still charged. For every White youth charged, there are two Latino and over five Black youth charged with a crime today.

Black-White Equity Gap: 5.50  
Latino-White Equity Gap: 2.01

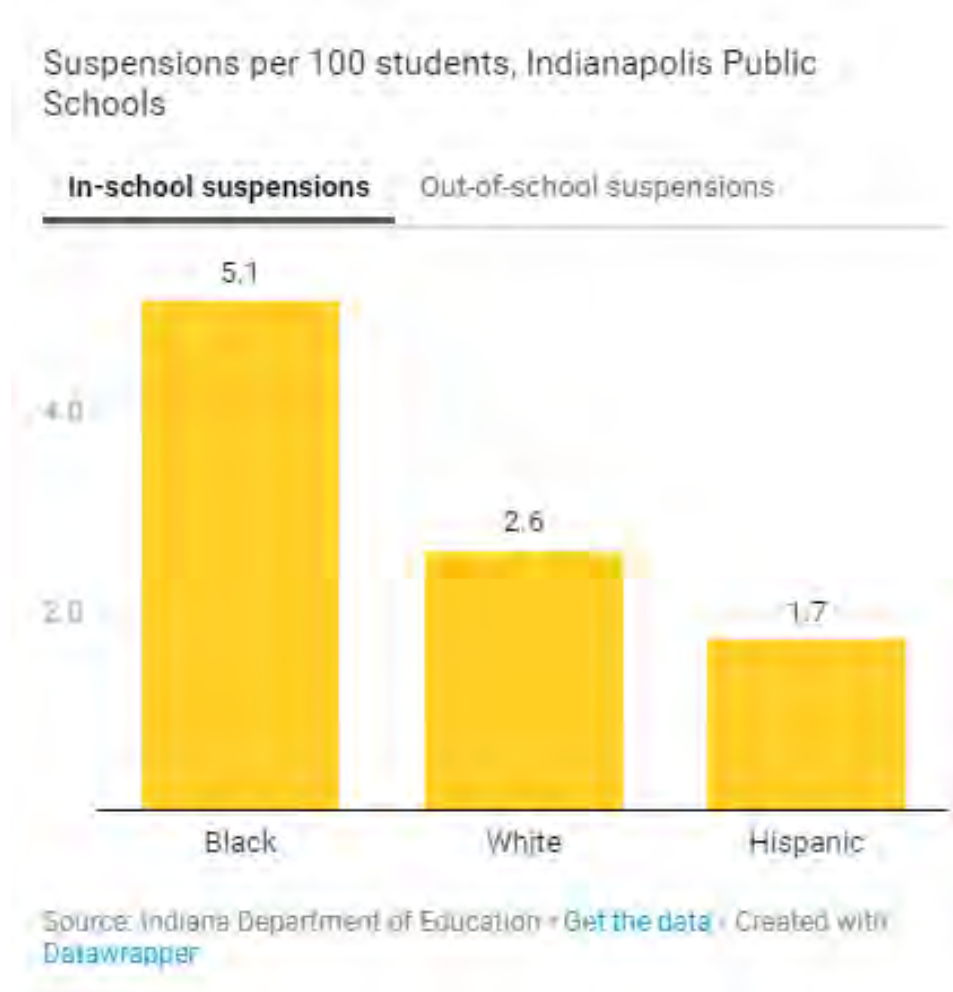
### **Closing the Equity Gap**

If Latino youth were charged at the same rate as White youth, the result would be nearly 600 fewer juvenile charges each year.



## In-School Suspensions (Driver of Incarceration Rate)

Removing children from school for even a few days disrupts their education and can provide increased opportunities for them to get into trouble. [Studies](#) have shown a child who has been suspended is more likely to be retained in grade, drop out, commit a crime, and interface with the [juvenile justice system](#).



### In-School Equity Gaps

Black-White Equity Gap: 1.96

Hispanic-White Equity Gap: 0.65

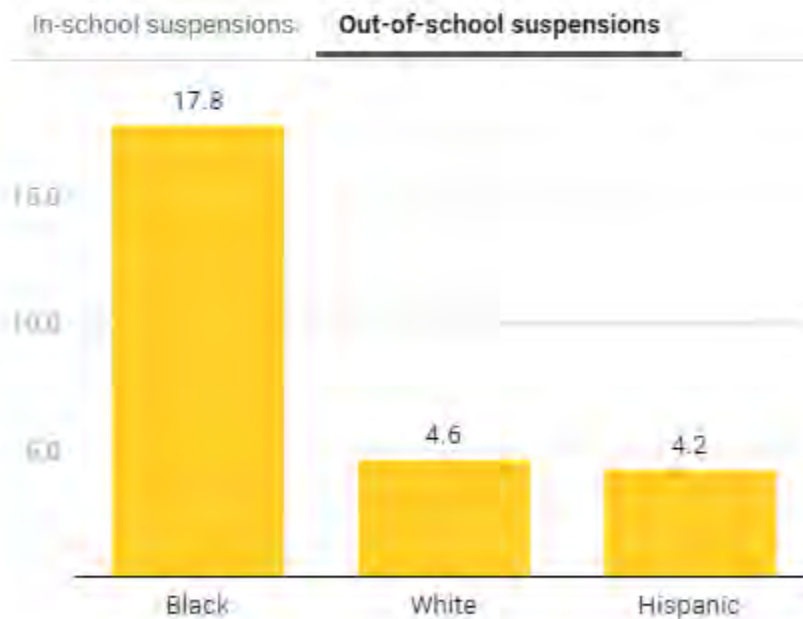
### Closing the Equity Gap

If Black children were suspended at the same rate as White children, the result would be over 3,000 fewer suspensions each year.

## Out-of-School Suspensions (Driver of Incarceration Rate)

Removing children from school for even a few days disrupts their education and can provide increased opportunities for them to get into trouble. [Studies](#) have shown a child who has been suspended is more likely to be retained in grade, drop out, commit a crime, and interface with the [juvenile justice system](#).

Suspensions per 100 students, Indianapolis Public Schools



Source: Indiana Department of Education • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

### Out-of-School Equity Gaps

Black-White Equity Gap: 3.87

Hispanic-White Equity Gap: 0.91

### Closing the Equity Gap

If Black children were suspended at the same rate as White children, the result would be over 3,000 fewer suspensions each year.