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# LORAIN COUNTY RACIAL EQUITY AGENDA

RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS  
FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

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2022

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**



Community Foundation  
LORAIN COUNTY

## Racism as a Public Health Crisis: From Declarations to Dismantling

In 2020, the YWCA began work on the creation of the Lorain County Racial Equity Center (LCREC). The Lorain County Racial Equity Center is a “rebranding” of the YWCA of Elyria to greater represent to the community the work we have historically done in the fulfillment of our mission - the elimination of racism and empowerment of women. The document contained herein, **Lorain County Racial Equity Agenda**, will be the foundational piece of the Lorain County Racial Equity Center and the expected subsequent work.

In the aftermath of the racial unrest spurred by the murder of George Floyd, the YWCA was instrumental in getting resolutions declaring racism as a public health crisis passed by the cities of Elyria, Lorain, Oberlin, and the Lorain County Commissioners. The YWCA further pledged to work with each entity to ensure that their declarations would not be mere words, but rather the necessary first response to dismantling systemic racism in Lorain County. The Lorain County Racial Equity Center and the **Lorain County Racial Equity Agenda** are the first steps in the realization of that pledge.

Building on the success of the **YWCA 21 Day Racial Equity Challenge**, the **Racial Equity Institute’s Groundwater Training**, and the work of the **Anti-Hate Taskforce**, it was clear that the community was eager to bring a coalition together around a suggested framework like the **Toledo Black Agenda** through a Lorain County lens; and utilizing information gleaned from the Equity Audit generated by the Nord Family Foundation and the Center for Community Solutions.

The LCREC Working Group donated 12 months of dedication to this project: Cindy Andrews, Ryan Aroney, Tania Boster, Jack Bradley, Dave Covell, Denise Douglas, Tony Gallo, A. G. Miller, Patricia O’Brien, Fallon Petersen, Cecelia Render, and Catherine Woskobnick. Each led sub-committees comprised of even more community stakeholders that identified and quantified the social determinants of health.

We will share these findings widely and re-evaluate them on a regular basis. If there is an additional “pillar” to be added or if you would like to join us on this journey, reach out to any of the members listed.

We are very much aware of the magnitude of the problem of racism in America and the challenges ahead for the Lorain County Racial Equity Center. However, to quote James Baldwin, **“not everything that is faced can be changed but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”**

Respectfully,

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LCREC Working Group  
YWCA Elyria

Cynthia Andrews, Co-Chair  
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## Contents + Context

Lorain County has a long, if mostly unrecognized history of its Black, Brown and Indigenous people. Although Ohio’s Constitution did not permit slavery, the enactment of the Black Codes in 1804 severely limited free Blacks. For those enslaved in the South, this important North Coast location offered escape to Canada by way of the maritime Underground Railroad. After the Civil War, a Black elite class emerged, until the 1920s when segregation took stronger hold. By the time Lorain County saw the arrival of people from Mexico and Puerto Rico colorism was so entrenched that they, like African –Americans, were seen as a people of a subordinate race than whites. With the end of World War II, people began pushing back against segregation, supporting the public collective and Black and Brown businesses in greater numbers.

According to the 2019 Lorain County Community Health Assessment, nearly 30% of residents in the city of Lorain identify as Latinx. Lorain County as a whole comprises the largest Latinx population in the State of Ohio, predominantly of Puerto Rican descent.

Reflecting on the history and present state of Lorain County offers inspiration and demands commitment for the future. The research and recommendations here result from an ambitious journey taken by a number of Lorain County community organizations and residents. There are resources and statistics, many of which may be unsurprising (and some that might be). But the heart of this work—to address Racism as a Public Health Crisis in a comprehensive and meaningful way—resides in three questions:

### **What have we done? What must we do now? What are we waiting for?**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Health Equity</b>	3
<b>Education</b>	15
<b>Housing</b>	29
<b>Economic Justice + Workforce Development</b>	33
<b>Criminal Justice + Community Policing</b>	36
<b>Community History</b>	40
<b>Work Groups + Subcommittees</b>	44
<b>Community Participants + Touchpoints</b>	46
<b>Resources</b>	47



# HEALTH EQUITY + JUSTICE

## Summary

Disparities in health outcomes for different racial and ethnic groups begin at birth and compound over the course of a lifetime. Black and Brown babies are more likely to be born too small or too early, and are about three times less likely to survive to their first birthday than their white counterparts. Black and Brown adults are more likely to die from illnesses like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and COVID-19. On average, **Black residents of Lorain County can expect to live a half a decade less than their white neighbors.** The list of health issues that disproportionately impact Black and Brown people is long, significant, and frightening.

We begin with health equity and justice because physical and mental health is central to individual well-being. The evidence of health disparities is irrefutable, and continuing research is showing the **connection between a lifetime experiencing discrimination and microaggressions and a host of negative health conditions**, and how the physical impact of trauma can be passed through generations.

**The observable health disparities did not happen by accident and do not exist in a vacuum.**

When considering how to change the health status of Black and Brown people, it is critical to remember that **disparities are not naturally made but rather are the result of an intention to develop policies and practices that marginalize communities of color.** If we are serious about improving the health status of this community, we must ask hard and unflinching questions. We must ask why the housing stock in our neighborhoods can remain infested with lead, well known to impair the cognitive ability of our children. We must challenge our elected officials to answer the question why, in the most progressive and technologically advanced time in our history, in the richest country in the world, issues of food insecurity continue to exist. We must develop reasonable, responsive, innovative, and well-formed solutions that will directly address the needs of those in our communities. Most importantly, **we must reverse those practices that perpetuate health inequity and injustice.** There can be no fear of confronting history and its fostering of the intentional development of public policies that “ghettoized” neighborhoods making them unhealthy places for families to live. Tough questions with no easy solutions but all necessary inquiries in the movement toward healthcare equity.

The issues of health equity and justice are complex and massive in scope when considering a pathway toward their attainment. And while there are a significant number of health concerns that should be addressed in pursuit of these ideals, this document will identify only those that require immediate consideration.

**The data and research are clear that racism is a systemic public health crisis with serious consequences for Black and Brown Ohioans.** We can no longer ignore the oppressive presence of health inequity and injustice. To do so places an entire community at great peril.

## Next Steps

- **Incorporate “Health in All Policies” (HiAP) methodology in all areas of social determinants of health;** identify opportunities for implicit bias training
- **Engage Black and Brown people in the development of programs** to serve Black and Brown communities.
- **Devise a strategic plan for addressing disproportionate health issues** in the Black and Brown communities such as improving co-morbidities and infant mortality rates
- **Address food insecurity** and overall health by increasing daily access to healthy foods and fresh produce and promote programs that will support access
- **Identify preventive care needs** such as behavioral health and vaccination awareness

## What Is Health Equity?

A basic principle of public health is that all people have a right to health care.<sup>6</sup> When access to care is denied, significant negative differences in the health status between groups occur. These differences most often affect those who are marginalized because of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability status, geographic location, or some combination thereof. **People in these groups not only experience worse health but also tend to have less access to those resources which typically form the foundation of healthy communities.** Suitable housing, sound education nutritional food and safe neighborhoods are all examples of what are now called the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and are considered essential resources in the pursuit of Health Equity.<sup>7</sup>

### Health Equity

The actual definition of Health Equity is complicated by the influences of those elements related to SDOH and its similarity to its counterparts, Health Disparities, and Inclusion Health. The World Health Organization defines **HEALTH EQUITY as the “absence of avoidable, unfair or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically, geographically or by other means of stratification”** in the pursuit of optimal health status.<sup>8</sup> It is, as defined within the Veterans Health Administration’s Health Equity Plan, “the understanding of how people’s social characteristics and environments affect health...”<sup>9</sup>

Health inequities are not naturally occurring. They arise from racial and class inequities; from decisions that this society has made. **The single strongest predictor of our health is our position on the class pyramid.**

The issue of Health Equity is both massive in scope and complex when considering a pathway toward its attainment. One thing is without question; the data and research are clear that racism is a systemic and ongoing public health crisis with serious consequences for Black and Brown Ohioans. It is also clear that **racism has a profound and pervasive impact across all the factors that shape our health. This includes our healthcare delivery systems, education, housing, food, economic, environmental, criminal justice, and political systems, among others.**<sup>10</sup>

### Health Disparities

Health Disparities, on the other hand, are the **health-related outcomes in marginalized communities** which are directly attributable to the systematic and **unjust distribution of those critical resources** mentioned above.

Equally important is the somewhat derivative definition of **Inclusion Health**. This term is used to define a number of groups of people who are not usually well provided for by healthcare systems, have poorer, access to healthcare, experiences and health outcomes than even the most vulnerable of our population.<sup>11</sup> **This definition covers people who are homeless, vulnerable migrants (refugees, those undocumented, asylum seekers) and sex workers** to name a few.<sup>12</sup> The conceptual differences between these terms are subtle but significant.

## Defining Health Justice

The blatant and persistent inequities in the delivery of health care have spawned a new partner in the battle for equal access. The call for health justice is one properly combined with that of health equity, using the force of law to provide the underlying legal support necessary to ensure the full and equal distribution of those social resources required to facilitate the elimination of health disparities. In fact, while this concept also considers the legal system to be complicit in the perpetuation of inequality by the enactment of laws that perpetuate poor health,<sup>13</sup> it strongly advocates for the use of civil rights laws to enforce a “healthcare for all” model of care.<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this document, **Health Justice theory states that health equity can only be achieved through the equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens which exist in the healthcare system.**<sup>15</sup>

## Plan Purpose

The purposes of this Health Care Equity Plan:

1. To better **educate the community regarding the inequities in the delivery of health care** that serve to disenfranchise those most vulnerable residents—those who are Black/Brown and poor.
2. To illustrate why a “Health in All Policies” (HiAP) methodology is critical to the elimination or significant reduction of disparities in the health care system. HiAP is a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by **incorporating health care considerations into decision making across multiple sectors and policy areas.**
3. To **identify those health-related concerns in our community that require immediate attention** and to present strategies that help to focus the work and commitment to transformation, required for the success of this initiative.
4. Ultimately, to **provide suggested pathways toward the elimination of the barriers** to Health Equity and Health Justice for everyone.

## The Cumulative Impact of Healthcare Inequity

Racism and the inequities it creates are well documented as drivers of health disparities and overall poor health in the Black and Brown communities. While these are avoidable differences in health outcomes among groups,<sup>16</sup> the ongoing trauma of systemic or institutional racism<sup>17 18</sup>, results in an unequal allocation of social resources that shape health status. Resulting imbalances can be seen in conditions that shape and define Social Determinants of Health.<sup>19</sup> But beyond these things, evidence suggests that **the stress of the experience of racism may have its own physical impact.** “It’s about access and unequal treatment, but it’s also about much more than that” states April Thames, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Social Neuroscience in Health Psychology lab at the University of Southern California.<sup>20</sup>

**The toxicity of lifelong exposure to discrimination has been found to impact health in general and neurologic health in particular.**<sup>21</sup> Several studies have shown a clear biological link between poor health outcomes and racism, even after controlling for other factors that might serve as proxy; access to health services for example.<sup>22</sup> In fact, **changes to the neurological, endocrine, and immune systems have become common, contributing to a great number of additional health maladies including high rates of infant mortality, hypertension, and heart disease.**<sup>23</sup> The presence of these illnesses and other comorbidities renders Black and Brown people more vulnerable to illnesses like COVID-19, shortens lifespans and increases medical complications from otherwise survivable diseases.<sup>24</sup>

There are also real differences in how people are treated when they obtain care. The examples are many and range from providing significant misinformation (telling a patient with suspected Multiple Sclerosis that “Black people don’t get MS<sup>25</sup>) to disparities in the way illnesses are managed. For example, **Black and Brown patients experiencing a stroke are one quarter less likely to be given thrombolysis, the treatment which is known to be most effective, than White patients.**<sup>26</sup> In her book CASTE, Isabelle Wilkerson discusses that empirical studies show physicians often disregard the reports of pain from Black and Brown patients, wrongly believing that Black and Brown people in particular have higher pain thresholds. This, according to Wilkerson, has led physicians to undertreat or deny pain medication to Black and Brown patients—even those with metastatic cancer—while readily prescribing medication to White patients reporting equivalent levels of pain. **The disparity is so severe that Black and Brown people as a group receive pain medication at levels beneath the threshold established by the World Health Organization.**<sup>27 28</sup>

California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris is a pediatrician who has studied the profound health effects of childhood trauma and stress. Dr. Burke Harris identified the long term environmental and racially tinged experiences of Black and Brown people to be a major cause of the higher rates of COVID-19 in those communities. We (this country) have created these differences— and they are literally leading Black and Brown people to die in far greater numbers, than others” she said.<sup>29</sup>

## **Health in All Policies Methodology**

The Health in All Policies methodology should be strongly considered in developing the policies and practices required for the implementation of this plan. Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a collaborative approach that **integrates and articulates health considerations into policymaking across several sectors intended to improve the health of all communities and people.** HiAP recognizes that health is created by a multitude of factors beyond, the scope of traditional public health activities.<sup>30</sup> Undeniably, **factors associated with Social Determinants of Health, serve to shape not only the quality of lives of those in our community but also their health status.** Using a HiAP framework for the implementation of this plan allows for healthcare to be in the forefront of policy and decision making while supporting the seamless integration of both health equity and health justice concerns.



## The Five Key Elements of Health in All Policies<sup>31</sup>

1. **Promote health, equity, and sustainability.** Health in All Policies promotes health, equity, and sustainability through two avenues: (1) incorporating health, equity, and sustainability into specific policies, programs, and processes, and (2) embedding health, equity, and sustainability considerations into government decision-making processes **so that healthy public policy becomes the normal way of doing business.** Promoting equity is an essential part of Health in All Policies.
2. **Support intersectional collaboration.** Health in All Policies brings together partners from many sectors to recognize the links between health and other issue and policy areas, breaks down silos, and builds new partnerships to promote health and equity and increase government efficiency. Agencies that are not typically considered as health agencies play a major role in shaping the economic, physical, social, and service environments in which people live, and therefore have an important role to play in promoting health and equity. A **Health in All Policies approach focuses on deep and ongoing collaboration, rather than taking a superficial or one-off approach.**
3. **Benefit multiple partners.** Health in All Policies is built upon the idea of “co-benefits” and “win-wins.” Health in All Policies work should benefit multiple partners, simultaneously addressing the goals of public health agencies and other agencies to benefit more than one end (achieve co-benefits) and create efficiencies across agencies (find win-wins). This concept is essential for securing support from partners and can **reduce redundancies and ensure more effective use of scarce government resources.** Finding a balance between multiple goals will sometimes be difficult, and requires negotiation, patience, and learning about and valuing others’ priorities.
4. **Engage stakeholders.** Health in All Policies engages a variety of stakeholders, such as community members, policy experts, advocates, members of the private sector, and funders. Robust stakeholder engagement is essential for ensuring that work is responsive to community needs and for **garnering valuable information necessary to create meaningful and impactful change.**
5. **Create structural or procedural change.** Over time, Health in All Policies creates permanent changes in how agencies relate to each other and how government decisions are made. This requires maintenance of both structures which can sustain inter-sectoral collaboration and mechanisms which can **ensure a health and equity lens in decision-making processes across the whole of government.** This can be thought of as “embedding” or “institutionalizing” Health in All Policies within existing or new structures and processes of government.

## Ohio by The Numbers

When it comes to developing a health, system rooted in the principles of health equity and justice, the numbers below will show that Ohio and Lorain County face significant challenges.

- Ohio **consistently ranks among the bottom half of states on measures of health and wellbeing.** For example, Ohio ranks 38 of 50 states on *America's Health Rankings 2019 report*.
- In the Health Policy Institute of Ohio's *2019 Health Value Dashboard*, **Ohio ranks 46 out of 50 states and D.C. on health value, a composite measure of population health and healthcare spending**, this means that Ohioans are less healthy and spend more on health care than people in most other states.
- Ohio is in the bottom quartile (42 out of 50 states) for Black and Brown child wellbeing based on the *Annie E. Casey Foundation 2017 Race for Results Report*, indicating that Black and Brown children in Ohio do not have adequate supports to achieve optimal health.
- Ohioans of color face large gaps in outcomes across socio-economic factors, community conditions and health care. This, in turn, drives **poorer health outcomes among Ohioans of color, such as higher rates of infant mortality and premature death.**
- Black and Brown women and low-income mothers are several times **more likely to suffer from postpartum mental illness but less likely to receive treatment than other mothers**, according to recent studies.
- According to the study, "Suicide attempts rising among Black teens." Reuters, Oct 16, 2019, while the overall proportion of teens reporting suicidal thoughts or plans declined for all racial and ethnic groups during the study period, **the proportion of Black teens attempting suicide surged by 73%.**
- A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that **Black and Brown women are about three times more likely to die from causes related to pregnancy**, compared to White women in the United States.
- In Cleveland, Ohio **Black and Brown babies are dying at a rate of 7 times** that of White babies. Generally, in Ohio, **Black and Brown infants die at a rate of 2-3 times** that of White infants<sup>32</sup>
- Black and Brown children are almost three and a half times more likely to die within 30 days after surgery than White children, according to a new study published in the journal *Pediatrics*<sup>33</sup>
- Twenty percent of Ohio children live in poverty (Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity 2019)
- **Black and Brown people have the highest mortality rate for all cancers** combined compared with any other racial and ethnic group.<sup>34</sup>
- The likelihood of having two or more significant conditions is 60% by the age of 75-79 years, and more than 75% by 85-89 years causing most Seniors to suffer complications from comorbidities.<sup>35</sup>
- **Food insecurity in Ohio has nearly doubled** from 13.9% to 23%<sup>36</sup>
- In Ohio, more than one-in-six older adults (17.6% ) face the threat of hunger. **Ohio is among the 10 worst states in the nation for food insecurity among older adults**, with over 457,000 Ohioans over age 60 who are either "marginally food insecure" or "food insecure," according The Center for Community Solutions, "Fighting Food Insecurity Among Older Adults" (2017)
- **Suicide attempts for Black teens rose 73%** in 2019 while they fell for every other group

## Statistics – Provided by Lorain County Public Health

According to the 2019 Lorain County Community Health Assessment (CHA) and the American Community Survey 5-year estimates, the cities of **Elyria and Lorain experience a larger burden of poverty, alcohol and drug use, chronic disease, smoking, and uninsured rates, compared to the rest of Lorain County**, all of which are strongly linked to other poor health outcomes, specifically a higher infant mortality, low birth weights, and preterm births. According to the County Health Rankings, Lorain County has 312,964 people, and is the ninth largest county in Ohio. **The cities of Lorain and Elyria contain 118,000 people, who are more likely to be of a racial/ethnic minority and experience worse health outcomes related to the social determinants of health** like housing, employment, and educational attainment, and low access to healthcare due to limited or no insurance coverage.

### Race

**Almost 15% of Elyria residents are Black compared to 9% across Lorain County.** The median household income in Elyria is nearly 30% lower than the median income of Ohio and only 58% of housing units are owner-occupied. **More than 22% of Elyria residents live in poverty, compared to the county average of 13.5%** and the current unemployment rate is 5.2%. 16% of Elyria residents have a Bachelor's degree education or higher, compared to Ohio's rate of 26.6%, and 86.7% of residents have a high school diploma. **In the city of Lorain, 16.2% of residents are Black and 28.3% of residents are Hispanic/Latinx.** As for key indicators for the social determinants of health, 57.9% of housing units are owner-occupied, 82.4% of residents have a high school diploma, the unemployment rate is 6.5%, and 26.2% of residents live in poverty.

### Chronic Conditions

According to the 2019 Lorain County CHA, **16% of Elyria and city of Lorain adults have been diagnosed with diabetes, compared to the county (13%)** and 40% have a BMI >30 (obese) compared to the county (38%). Only 66% of adults from Elyria and city of Lorain visited a primary care provider in the past year compared to the county (71%). **These adults were also more likely to have been diagnosed with high blood pressure (44%) and high blood cholesterol (36%) compared to the county.** While the 2019 Lorain County CHA does not provide reports on city-specific health data on all topics, there is stratification done between rural, urban, and suburban communities. The city of Lorain and Elyria are considered urban communities. **In urban communities, 13% of respondents did not have healthcare coverage, compared to the county (11%) and state (9%).** 36% percent of respondents rated their health as excellent or very good, compared to the county (49%).

## Pregnancy and Birth

From 2014-2018, **the smoking rate (at any point during pregnancy) among pregnant Black people in Lorain County women was 195.4 per 1,000 live births: 68% higher than that of Ohio.** During this same period, the maternal smoking rate among pregnant Hispanic/Latinx women was 126.7 per 1,000 live births; White women smoked at 170.8 per 1,000 live births. During 2014-2018, the average percentage of births among Black mothers who had a BMI >30 (obese) was 36%; compared to 30.7% of Hispanic/Latinx mothers, 27% of White/Caucasian mothers who gave birth during this period.

When observing health disparities in 2016-2020 rates of preterm births among women living in Urban areas (city of Lorain/Elyria/Oberlin), vs. suburban and rural communities, we found further justification for focus on the primary and secondary populations identified above. **Disparity between preterm birth rates among White and Black families is higher in urban population when compared to suburban/rural population.** The preterm birth rate per 1,000 births among Black families in urban areas was 147.3 and in suburban/rural areas was 96.6. The preterm rate per 1,000 births among white families in urban areas was 106.3 and in suburban/rural areas was 88.4. Finally, the preterm rate per 1,000 births among Hispanic/Latinx families in urban areas was 113.9 and in suburban/rural areas was 114.8. This data illustrated that **for both Black and White families, preterm birth rates are higher for people living in city of Lorain and Elyria.** While for Hispanic/Latinx families, there was little difference in preterm birth rate based on geographic location, but rate is always higher than White counterparts.

These same families may also be affected by inadequate prenatal care as defined by the Kotelchuck Index. While the rate of inadequate prenatal care isn't as high as the urban areas, the disparity between income status is much higher in suburban/rural areas. **Low-income Medicaid recipients of any race/ethnicity have over a 2X higher rate of inadequate prenatal care than private payers in suburban/rural areas. Medicaid recipients have an 86% higher rate of inadequate prenatal care in urban areas** compared to those with private payers. The larger disparity is also reflected in the preterm birth rate (while not as dramatic). Medicaid recipients in suburban/rural populations have a 15% higher preterm birth rate when compared to private insurance. This disparity is only 12% in urban populations.

## Health Statistics for Black Men

We are losing a generation of Black men in America. **Black men suffer worse health than any other racial group in America.** As a group, Black men have the **lowest life expectancy and the highest death rate** from specific causes when compared to both men and women of other racial and ethnic groups.

**Black men live 7 years less than men of other racial groups.** They have a higher death rate than Black women for all leading causes of death. Black men suffer more from preventable diseases

that are treatable, have a higher incidence of diabetes and prostate cancer. **In Lorain County, Black men have a 38% obesity rate and 44% are considered overweight.** Suicide is the third leading cause of death in 15-24-year-old Black men. In 2017, homicide was the number one cause of death for young Black men between the ages of 15 and 44.

## Recommendations

1. **Incorporate “Health in All Policies” (HiAP) methodology in all areas of social determinants of health.** The result of the utilization of the HiAP approach will be health, equity, and sustainability. Additionally, the **engagement of stakeholders in true collaborative efforts** will drive effective change.
2. **Engage Black and Brown people in the development of programs to serve the Black and Brown communities.** Here, we underscore the critical nature of **involving every level of the Black and Brown communities in planning from the outset.** Understanding what will impact a community requires meaningful input from those same communities. To achieve Health Equity, authentic collaboration, transparency, and diversity is not an option, but a requirement.
3. **Highlight the availability of services as well as stressing personal responsibility.** In our community, a wide range of services are being offered, yet Black and Brown people continue to suffer health-related challenges at a much higher rate. For many, these are conditions that can be addressed through healthier eating and engaging in physical activity. **Greater access to and visibility of fresh, healthy food and access to exercise programs and resources** must be made available and accessible through community programming such as the mobile food pantries offered by Oberlin Community Services and El Centro de Servicios Sociales.
4. **Identify ongoing Implicit Bias trainings that health care workers must attend; increase workforce diversity overall in the Health Care System, and inspire all community organizations (board members, leaders and employees) as well as community members to engage in Implicit Bias trainings to help dismantle racism at all levels of the Health Care System.** Concurrently, it is imperative that the health and human service providers across geographical areas communicate and collaborate to maximize available services and resources to serve the Black and Brown communities.
5. **Devise a strategic plan for improving co-morbidities for those in the Black and Brown communities who suffer from conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, COPD, and obesity.** The plan must include a wide variety of points of emphasis including, but not limited to healthy eating, active living, engaging in preventive screenings, the elimination/reduction of tobacco and alcohol products through available cessation programs, encouraging regular medical check-ups and increased consultations with a family doctor. It is important to note that **attention must be placed on the often-**

**overlooked barrier of transportation as public transportation is a primary means of getting to work, going to medical appointments, and even for grocery shopping.** Without access to transportation, many of the tactics outlined above will fail.

6. **Confront and address infant mortality rates in the Black and Brown communities.** At every level (federally, state-wide, and locally), the infant mortality rates among Black people well exceeds that of other races and ethnicities. The keys to reducing these figures involve (i) educating Black and Brown mothers about proper care methods to be utilized and **connecting them with proper available and affordable resources**, (ii) tackling and resolving **root cause concerns that Black and Brown mothers hold** that preclude them from seeking appropriate health care services during pregnancy; (iii) providing **effective training for health care providers on racism and implicit bias** and (iv) developing a **full continuum of maternal and infant care** engaging all relevant types of providers.
  
7. **Address food insecurity and overall health.** According to USDA, **22.5% of Black households are food insecure which is significantly higher than the national average of 12.3%.** Lack of access to healthy foods results in a myriad of ramifications. Due to alarmingly high poverty rates in the Black and Brown communities, decisions are often being made to pay rent, utilities, and other necessities ahead of healthy food purchases due to limited resources. Specific tactics for addressing food insecurity include:
  8. **Increase daily access to healthy foods and fresh produce for children, adults, and seniors.** This is critically important because presently, Black and Brown communities are often disproportionately surrounded by food deserts. “Food deserts” are an area where people do not have access to affordable and nutritious food. As such, unified and coordinated efforts to **make public transportation, ride-sharing and other manners of transportation available** to residents will be vital.
  
9. **Educate children, adults and seniors about the federal programs designed to support those in need. A comprehensive and unified effort will increase access.** These federal programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.
  - a. (WIC), Child Nutrition Programs (i.e., the National School Lunch Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child, and Adult Care Food Program with a focus on children and seniors to name a few).
  - b. All these programs offer supplemental funding and benefits to parents as well as access to free nutritious meals for kids. For children, academic performance is directly related to poor nutrition (lower test scores, lack of sleep, increased tardiness, repeated grades, more absences, and behavioral instances that interrupt the learning day). As such, it is difficult to break the cycle of poverty when kids are set up to fail at an early point in their lives.

**10. Identify and address Behavioral Health issues because it is a critical factor that contributes to overall health.** We must work to ensure access to comprehensive, integrated mental health and addiction screenings and services for the Black and Brown communities including the promotion of early intervention measures. To experience any level of success with this, **proper execution of programs and messaging strategies that reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health and addiction services in the Black community** must be carefully crafted and deployed. Like the efforts being done at the statewide level, local agencies must work together to increase culturally meaningful screening, early intervention, and linkage to treatment and recovery services across the spectrum for mental and substance abuse disorders. (See COVID-19 Ohio Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint.) This pandemic has highlighted the acute need for enhanced attention to be placed on the availability of Behavioral Health services. There has been sickness, death, job loss, uncertainty, financial challenges, racial unrest, and isolation.

**11. Provide more awareness and education about the importance of all vaccinations and the lack of vaccinations and their impact on all aspects of society.**

Inside of these efforts, however, **we must pay particularly close attention to the increasing Black and Brown teen suicide rates and “cries for help” resulting from peer pressure, stress, domestic abuse at home, bullying and other triggers.**

As noted above, a myriad of critical issues needs to be addressed all of which contribute to overall health. Some additional issues that will need to be addressed include **(1) environmental issues that are alarmingly present in the Black and Brown communities with unsafe housing conditions or the presence of lead, for instance as well as providing clean drinking water along with other factors that can hamper or enhance one’s life; (2) combatting stress, violence, trauma and toxic situations, (3) providing effective, comprehensive services for Seniors and for individuals with disabilities, (4) contending with isolation due to COVID-19 and especially for aging Seniors, and (5) dealing with the digital divide.**

None of the above changes will be possible unless there is coordinated collaboration among service providers across the region along with a suitable increase in funding investments in the service organizations that render these indispensable services.

# EDUCATION

## Summary

Education is widely accepted to be a fundamental resource, touching every American and every resident of Lorain County. **Quality education can often be a route to wealth accumulation, especially for marginalized groups.** While obtaining higher education does not ensure that all will be unaffected by economic inequality, college degrees are regarded as a primary vehicle for reducing poverty and closing the wealth gaps in evidence between Black and Brown people and Whites. Yet, **racial and ethnic disparities are evident at every level of the education and higher education systems.**

This Education section of the larger *Lorain County Racial Equity Agenda* is intended to highlight the *Education Pipeline* (Prekindergarten through Post-Secondary). Two of the sections, early childhood education and middle and high school education, include a reference to a local example of educational excellence occurring in our community now which is contained in the Appendix. **The intent is to share information AND spark a deeper discussion about where the ‘leaks’ in the pipeline exist so that we can help move the community toward actionable solutions** that will make a lasting positive impact on all children.

## Next Steps

- **Engage current and retired Black and Brown teachers**, as well as nonprofit practitioners to get a more well-rounded view of the narrative.
- **Reimagine education with equity as a focus**, including hiring more educators of color.
- **Increase preschool enrollment throughout Lorain County** with an eye on aligning education goals PreK through college.



## Overall School District Performance

Contextual statistics demonstrate an adverse disparate impact on educational attainment between districts in Lorain County with majority Black and Brown students compared to districts with majority White students.

There are 14 public school districts in Lorain County. As shown in the chart below, **most school districts in Lorain County are not racially or ethnically diverse.** Districts where less than half of the students are White include Clearview (35%), Elyria (48%), City of Lorain (21%), and Oberlin (48%).

**Racial/Ethnic Composition of Students  
By School District in Lorain County, 2021\***

DISTRICT	Total Enrollment	Black/AA Students % of Total	Hispanic Students % of Total	Multiracial Students % of Total	White Students % of Total
Amherst	3527	3.0%	12.6%	3.9%	78.9%
Avon	4378	3.1%	7.1%	4.6%	81.4%
Avon Lake	3590	1.6%	3.6%	3.6%	89.1%
Clearview	1456	13.2%	43.2%	8.6%	34.8%
Columbia	868	0.1%	3.8%	1.6%	93.4%
Elyria	5675	19.4%	15.0%	17.1%	48.1%
Firelands	1601	0.8%	5.9%	2.0%	91.1%
Keystone	1457	0.2%	2.5%	3.9%	92.5%
Lorain	5749	25.4%	44.4%	9.0%	20.8%
Midview	2742	2.6%	5.8%	3.7%	86.8%
N. Ridgeville	4359	1.9%	6.8%	2.8%	86.7%
Oberlin	821	18.3%	12.1%	20.7%	47.8%
Sheffield/Sheffield Lake	1531	2.16%	13.5%	4.4%	78.0%
Wellington	894	1.4%	4.8%	4.8%	88.0%

\* All districts reported significantly less than 1% Pacific Islander students or American Indian students. Avon reported 3.7% Asian students; all other districts reported significantly less than 2% Asian students.

The Ohio Department of Education provides an overall letter grade for schools and districts to indicate how well its students are performing. This grade is determined by calculating six components: Achievement, Progress, Gap Closing, Improving At-Risk K-3 Readers, Graduation Rate, and Prepared for Success.

The Performance Index is used as part of the Achievement component score and measures the achievement of every student, not just whether the group as a whole reach Proficient or above. Districts and schools receive points for every student's level of achievement ("Advanced", "Accelerated", "Proficient", "Basic", or "Limited"). The higher each student's level, the more points the school earns

toward its index. This rewards districts and schools that improve the performance of higher- and lower-performing students.

**The Performance Index Score is out of a possible 120 points. We have intentionally selected 2018-19 data in an attempt to mitigate potential and unknown disruptions** in assessment data from the two most recent school years due to COVID-19.

District Name	% White Students	Performance Index Score 2018-19	Performance Index Percent 2018-19	Letter Grade of Performance Index
Lorain City	22%	64.461	53.7	D
Clearview Local	37%	78.669	65.6	D
Oberlin City Schools	48%	86.761	72.3	C
Elyria City Schools	49%	74.736	62.3	D
Sheffield-Sheffield Lake City	78%	90.882	75.7	C
Amherst Exempted Village	79%	97.895	81.6	B
Avon Local	82%	105.415	87.8	B
Midview Local	86%	92.623	77.2	C
North Ridgeville City	86%	91.377	76.1	C
Avon Lake City	90%	104.454	87	B
Wellington Exempted Village	91%	84.332	70.3	C
Firelands Local	92%	95.412	79.5	C
Keystone Local	93%	95.322	79.4	C
Columbia Local	94%	95.175	79.3	C

**Out of the 14 public school districts in Lorain County, eight (57 percent) received a “C” letter grade for their performance index for the 2018-19 school year, three received a “B” and another three received a “D”.** A larger proportion of students in Elyria (27 percent) and Lorain City School Districts (38 percent) had levels of achievement that fall in the “Limited” (lowest) category, compared to the other categories of state test achievement. **The three schools with a “D” rating all had larger shares of Black and Brown students** compared with the other districts in Lorain County.

### Third and Eighth Grade Proficiency Rates

Across the board, White students generally perform at higher academic proficiency rates than Black and Hispanic/Latinx students. **Academic proficiencies by the end of third and eighth grade can be significant predictors of future success throughout high school and college, particularly third grade reading and eighth grade math.** Students who graduate from high school have an increased likelihood of earning higher levels of income.

As reported above, **Elyria and Lorain City Schools have the largest overall enrollments and the largest number of Black and Brown students in Lorain County.** Data on proficiency rates will be reported for those two districts as proficiency rates by race/ethnicity in other districts in the county are suppressed due to lower populations of Black and Brown students.

In general, **White students performed at higher proficiency rates in Elyria and Lorain City Schools in grade 3 ELA (English/Language Arts) and Math and grade 8 ELA, Math, and Science.** Exceptions are seen in grade 3 Math in Elyria and grade 3 ELA in city of Lorain, where Hispanic students performed slightly better than White students. Significant findings include:

District	Grade & Subject	Proficiency Rate Black Students	Proficiency Rate White Students
Elyria	Grade 3 ELA	29.3%	62.4%
Lorain	Grade 3 Math	36.6%	64.4%
Elyria	Grade 8 Science	32.9%	67.1%
Lorain	Grade 8 Math	23.7%	54.4%

## Graduation Rates

### Class of 2019: Graduation Rates

The Graduation Rate component looks at the percent of students who successfully finish high school with a diploma in four or five years. Class of 2019 is the most recent pre-COVID data.

DISTRICT	Total		White		Black/AA		Hispanic		Econ. Disadv.	
	# Students	Grad Rate	# Students	Grad Rate	# Students	Grad Rate	# Students	Grad Rate	# Students	Grad Rate
Amherst	326	97.2%	267	98.1%	11	100%	36	94.4%	38	84.2%
Avon	325	99.1%	275	99.3%	<10	N.R.	17	94.1%	23	91.3%
Avon Lake	300	97.3%	277	97.8%	<10	N.R.	<10	N.R.	21	85.7%
Clearview	114	93.0%	55	89.1%	16	93.8%	31	96.8%	114	93.0%
Columbia	75	96.0%	73	95.9%	<10	N.R.	<10	N.R.	19	100%
Elyria	460	89.1%	261	90.4%	89	89.9%	45	86.7%	237	85.7%
Firelands	145	92.4%	133	92.5%	<10	N.R.	<10	N.R.	36	86.1%
Keystone	128	96.9%	116	96.6%	<10	N.R.	<10	N.R.	16	93.8%
Lorain	583	82.0%	135	83.7%	148	79.1%	258	82.9%	575	83.0%
Midview	259	98.5%	231	98.3%	<10	N.R.	14	100%	51	94.1%
N. Ridgeville	330	93.9%	283	94.0%	12	91.7%	24	91.7%	65	92.3%
Oberlin	79	94.9%	28	92.9%	22	95.5%	<10	N.R.	34	91.2%
Sheffield/Sh. Lake	142	97.2%	120	97.5%	<10	N.R.	13	92.3%	44	93.2%
Wellington	86	93.0%	80	93.8%	<10	N.R.	<10	N.R.	26	88.5%

**Economically-disadvantaged students generally graduated at rates lower than the overall rate in eleven of the fourteen districts.**

**Black students graduated at rates lower than their White and Hispanic peers in Lorain City Schools. Hispanic students in Elyria graduated at lower rates than their Black or White peers. White students in Clearview Local Schools graduated at rates lower than both Hispanic and Black students.**

(Note: In many of the districts, graduation rates by race/ethnicity were suppressed due to lower populations of Black and Hispanic/Latinx students. No data was available for American Indian and Asian students due to even smaller populations.)

## Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism has been identified as an additional measure of student success because there is a significant body of research around the impact of chronic absenteeism on academic performance. Research supports that **chronic absenteeism, defined as missing at least 10 percent of the instructional time for any reason** – excused or unexcused absences, is one of the primary causes of low academic achievement.

COVID-19 brought negative impacts to attendance **during the 2020-21 school year, with 24 percent of Ohio students in K-12—close to 380,000—being chronically absent.** Disparities in absenteeism exist

across racial demographics, as Black and Brown students often experience more absences from the classroom than their White peers. Economic and social factors can also contribute to decreased school attendance, as disadvantaged communities with concentrated poverty may experience poorer mental, emotional, and physical health, lack of transportation, lack of safety, and other issues that can negatively impact attendance.

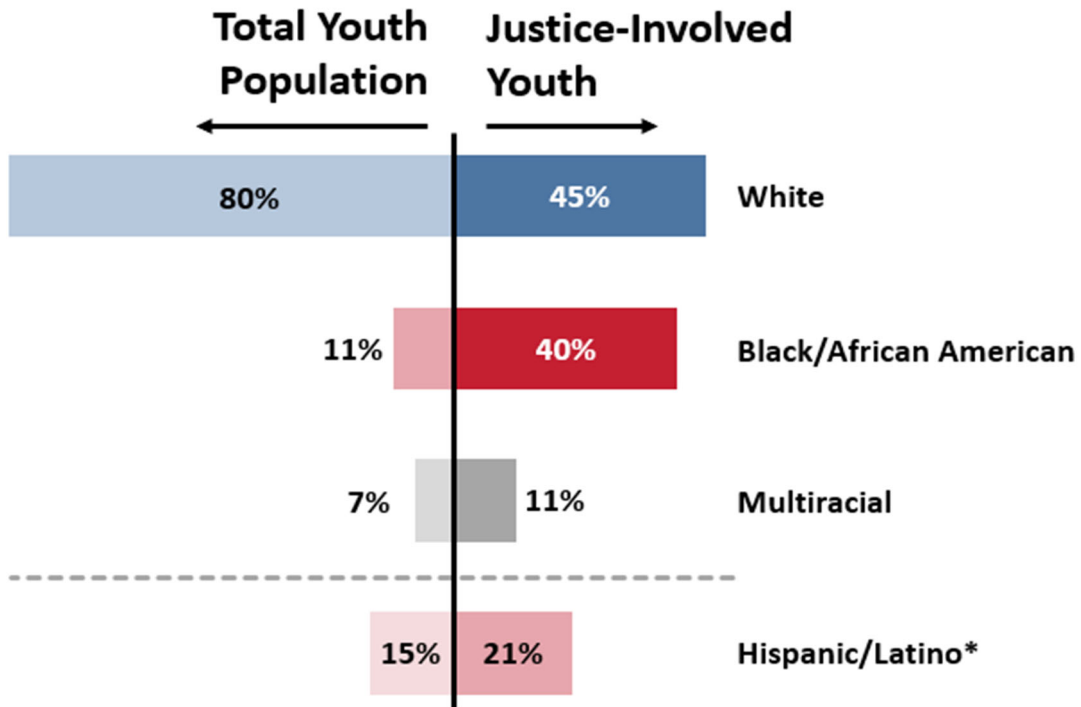
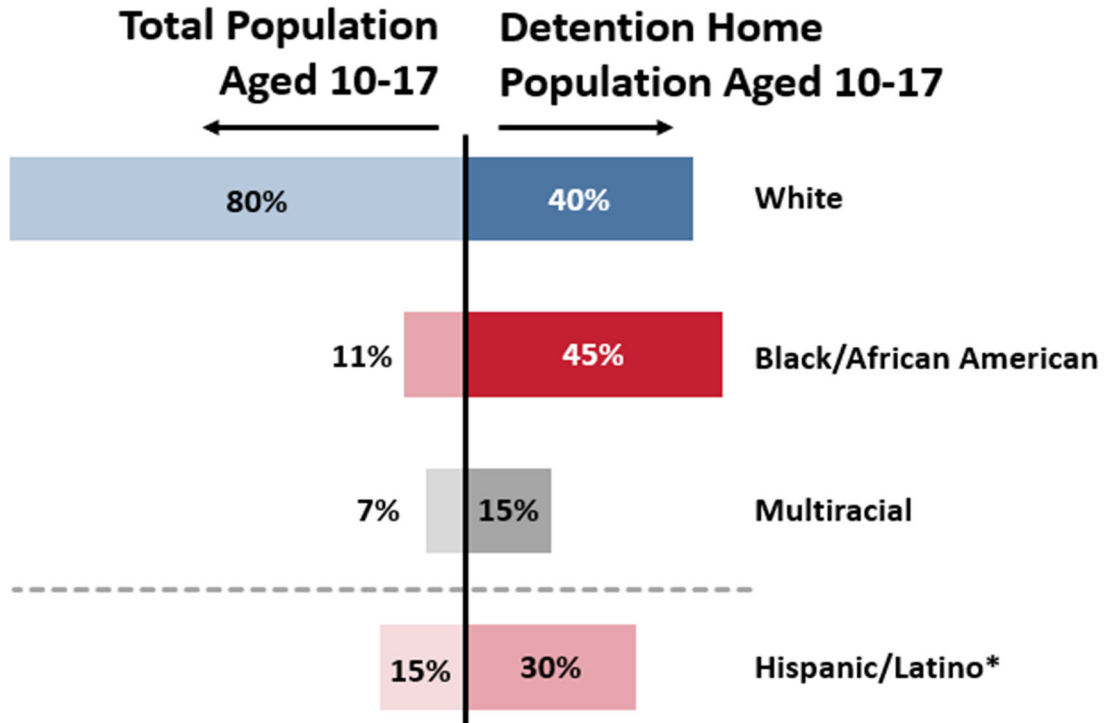
In Lorain County, absenteeism rates increased from the 2018-19 school year to 2020-21. **Lorain City School District had the highest rate of chronic absenteeism (63 percent) in the 2020-2021 school year.** There were no notable differences in absenteeism across gender, however, disparities did exist across race and for economically disadvantaged students. **Rates of chronic absenteeism were higher for Black and Hispanic/Latinx students in the majority of districts. Black students generally had the highest rate of absenteeism across most districts.** Rates of chronic absenteeism in economically disadvantaged students were also generally higher than rates for the district overall.

## **Discipline**

Racial disparities in discipline are in evidence in K-12 schools, and they persist in the criminal justice system. **Black and Hispanic/Latinx students are more likely than White students to be suspended in Lorain County's two largest school districts—Elyria and Lorain City Schools.** In Elyria, Black students are 2.8 times more likely than White students to be suspended, while Hispanic/Latinx students are 2.9 times more likely. In Lorain, Black students are 1.9 times more likely to be suspended. (School discipline data for Hispanic/Latino students in city of Lorain was not available.)

**Black youth and Hispanic/Latinx youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system.** Black youth make up just 11% of the population, but 45% of the justice-involved population in Lorain County. Hispanic/Latinx youth make up just 15% of the population, but 30% of the justice-involved population in Lorain County.

The disparities were even wider for youth who were incarcerated in juvenile detention in 2020. **Black youth also spent 14 more days incarcerated, on average, than White youth.** (There was not a statistically significant difference between time spent in detention between Hispanic and non-Hispanic youth, so that data is not included.)



(Note: \*Hispanic/Latino is considered an ethnic category, not a racial category, so the rates are calculated separately and do not add to 100% with the racial categories.)

## Educational Attainment in Lorain County

Disparities in educational achievement often result in lower educational attainment for Black and Brown residents. The chart below demonstrates that these **disparities are in evidence in high school graduation rates and become even more pronounced among individuals in Lorain County who hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher.**

Lorain County Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	High School Graduate	Bachelor’s Degree
White	91.53	26.69
Black	83.99	13.47
Multiracial	83.65	21.06
Hispanic/Latinx	75.71	12.91

## Education, Wealth Gap, and Poverty in Lorain County

Living in areas with concentrated poverty can have negative effects on reading skills and academic success in school, which can negatively impact future earnings potential. **In Lorain County, Black children are four times more likely than White children to be living in poverty. Hispanic/Latinx children are three times more likely to be living in poverty.**

### Child Poverty Rate



There is a correlation between poverty and educational attainment. **Lorain County residents with only a high school degree were ten times as likely to be living in poverty than residents with at least a Bachelor’s degree.**

Median income is the level of income at which half of all households earn income below it and half earn income above it. **The median income for all households in Lorain County was \$58,427, but there is a wide gap between households where the householder is a person of color and White households.** The median income for non-Hispanic White households was more than double the median income of Lorain County's Black households.

## Early Childhood Education

Research demonstrates that the early years (birth to age 5) are among the most important years in a child's cognitive and social development. **High quality preschool programs have been shown to improve outcomes for children throughout their lives.** In 2015, the US Department of Education shared a report, "A Matter of Equity: Preschool in America", which demonstrated that children who participated in high-quality preschool programs are less likely to utilize special education services, or be retained in their grade, and are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college, and succeed in their careers when compared to children who did not attend high-quality preschool programs.

Recent national data shows a very significant drop in children attending Pre-K during the 2020-21 school year (attributed to disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic). **In Ohio, Pre-K showed an overall decline of 26.7%. National preschool enrollment data indicates these declines are likely highest among Hispanic preschool students. At the national level, 40% of Hispanic students were missing from preschool in 2020 compared to 34% of Black children and 35% of White children.** Comparable data specific to Lorain County was not available.

Advocacy groups throughout Lorain County understand the need for quality early childhood education. Working together, they are making progress with identifying the gaps and forming collaborations to improve and strengthen programs that serve the birth through age five population.

There are **three United Way Collaborations in Lorain County focused on quality early education and Kindergarten readiness. These include Ready, Set, Go (Elyria), Oberlin Kids, and Rising Titans (Lorain).** These entities work within the boundaries, but also team together to improve practices within the county. In addition, **Lorain County has a well-established Head Start program** and most school districts provide preschool programming.

## Middle & High School Education

Middle and high school represent a time of great growth and change. Many students find adjusting to new responsibilities and learning environments challenging. Some of these challenges are:

- Black and Brown students are less likely than White students to have **access to college-ready courses** (especially science and math courses necessary for college readiness)



- Black and Brown students are less likely to be college-ready; they **do not have access to or are vastly underrepresented in AP courses**
- Black and Brown students spend **less time in the classroom due to discipline** (Black and Brown students are two times more likely to be suspended without educational services as White students)
- There is a **lack of Black and Brown representation in school personnel** (teachers that “look like me”)

Regardless of how education is delivered, either in the classroom or out-of-school, it is only a small part of the problems facing the educational attainment of our children. There is a need to support the whole child, their family, their community, and schools if there are to be discernible strides forward for these students.

The students most affected by these adverse conditions tend to be Black and Brown students. **From a social emotional perspective, middle and high school tends to be a difficult time** for most, if not all, students. Below are but a few examples of challenges all students, especially Black and Brown students, face:

- **Depression** – many causes; COVID restrictions, family issues, social media, bullying
- **Lack of access** – internet, educational devices
- **Lack of support** – family unable/unwilling to assist, limited outside interactions with supportive adults/peers
- **Lack of extracurricular activities**
- **Housing instability**
- **Food insecurity**

Since education is local in Ohio, it is the responsibility of each district to develop strategies to heighten the attainment of its students. The **districts must partner with community nonprofit organizations who can meet students where they are, offering more support than the schools themselves can**. The issue is always how do you scale these programs so more students benefit?

## Postsecondary

As we examined the educational pipeline, we note that the emphasis on quality pre-K is important and serves as a foundation for the educational pipeline from pre-K to postsecondary education. In this section, we examine the postsecondary education sector, educational attainment, and its connection to poverty levels in Lorain County. Finally, we look specifically at Lorain County Community College’s impact of educational attainment on the citizens of Lorain County. Lorain County ranks seventh in educational attainment out of northeast Ohio region’s 18 counties. **The current census data indicates that 38% of Lorain County adults, ages 25-64 years old hold an associate degree or higher**. African Americans make up 9% of the Lorain County population and comprise 13.47% of the Bachelor’s degree holders.

Lorain County is a suburban, urban and rural county. A deeper look at the two largest

suburban and urban cities in the county show a stark difference in poverty, median household income, and educational attainment.

Community	Persons in Poverty %	Median Household Income	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher
Avon Lake	5.1%	\$83,018	50.5%
Avon	2.8%	\$109,916	53.7%
Lorain	25.1%	\$38,291	12.7%
Elyria	23.1%	\$44,324	15.5%

If there is agreement that educational attainment has an impact on household income and poverty rates then we must examine opportunities to access postsecondary educational attainment. **Lorain County is home to one 2-year public college, one Ohio Technical Center, and one 4-year private college.**

This section will focus on Lorain County Community College and the opportunities for Lorain County citizens to obtain postsecondary education. Postsecondary educational attainment does start in high school for some high school students who are eligible for dual enrollment programs such as Early College High School and College Credit Plus.

Students in Early College have an opportunity to earn both their high school diploma and their Associates degree at the same time. **The criteria that are considered for enrollment in Early College are factors such as school attendance, school discipline history, grades and motivation.** Additionally:

- Priority given to **first-generation college-going students** (parents do not have a college degree)
- Students must be **proficient on the seventh-grade reading and math measurements:** the Next Generation Assessment (NGA) – formerly the Ohio Achievement Test (OAT).
- For **students transitioning from eighth grade to high school**

College Credit Plus (CCP) is Ohio’s dual enrollment program that provides students in grades 7-12 the opportunity to earn college credit and high school credit for free or very little cost to students and their families.

Although there have been **overall increases in CCP participation at a state level, data indicates relatively flat and overall lower participation for African American students** and among students who are not considered to be economically disadvantaged.

## Equity and Continuing Education

Overall, **45.2% of Lorain County high school graduates earn college credit from Lorain County Community College, including 24% of African American students.** While there are opportunities to obtain postsecondary education through dual enrollment in high school, additional work is still needed to increase participation in these important programs.

Increasing the educational opportunities and degrees earned for the adult population in Lorain County is of importance as well. Degrees and certificates awarded by Lorain County Community College almost doubled between 2011 to 2021 and almost tripled for African American students. Some of this growth can be attributed to expansion of short-term and fast-track credentials that lead to employer pathways.

**Team NEOs Misaligned Opportunities Report** examines economic and employment data across our population in Northeast Ohio. Ohio has three major employment sectors: Healthcare, IT and Manufacturing. Team NEO’s report indicates that **Black and Brown people are more concentrated in the lower wage occupations** within these sectors and/or are not largely represented based on their percentage of the population.

### TEAM NEO REPORT Where are minority workers concentrated and how can they be introduced to in-demand jobs in Northeast Ohio?

ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC/LATINO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manicurist and Pedicurist</li> <li>• Medical Scientists Except Epidemiologist</li> <li>• Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers</li> <li>• Postsecondary Teachers</li> <li>• Physicians, All Other, and Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric</li> <li>• Computer Programmers</li> <li>• Chefs and Head Cooks</li> <li>• Sewing Machine Operators</li> <li>• Teaching Assistants, Postsecondary</li> <li>• Biological Technicians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barbers</li> <li>• Postal Service Mail Workers</li> <li>• Parking Attendants</li> <li>• Nursing Assistants</li> <li>• Public Transit Drivers</li> <li>• Home Health and Personal Care Aides</li> <li>• Residential Advisors</li> <li>• Security Guards</li> <li>• Orderlies</li> <li>• Industrial Vehicle Operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meat Processing Packers</li> <li>• Farmworkers (Animal)</li> <li>• Farmworkers (Crops)</li> <li>• Meat Processing Preparers</li> <li>• Packers and Packagers, Hand</li> <li>• Production Workers</li> <li>• Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders</li> <li>• Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners</li> <li>• Military Occupations</li> <li>• Fast Food Cooks</li> </ul>

Similar data was found in the August 2021 Nord Family Foundation Report: [Racial Disparities in Lorain County](#).

## Top Occupation Categories & Average Annual Earnings, by Race and Ethnicity

**White workers** are disproportionately represented in **higher wage occupations** like legal, management, architecture and engineering occupations.

**Black/African American workers** are disproportionately represented in **lower wage occupations** like healthcare support, community and social services, and transportation and material moving occupations.

**Hispanic/Latino workers** are disproportionately represented in **lower wage** occupations like farming, fishing, and forestry, military, and building and maintenance occupations.



Educational attainment has the potential to lift individuals and families out of poverty. There are additional opportunities to increase awareness about many of the postsecondary pathways available to traditional and non-traditional aged students. Also, more emphasis should be placed not only on access, but also on earning credentials in high demand, high wage occupations.

## Recommendations

1. **Build a better narrative to understand what the community is saying** - Broaden the conversation to include those doing the work, current and retired Black and Brown teachers, as well as nonprofit practitioners.
2. **Rebuild the education system with equity as a focus.** Learning gaps are widening, disparities are growing, and students continue to struggle, especially in light of COVID-19's disparate impact on communities of color.
3. **Increase preschool enrollment throughout Lorain County.** Establish a baseline and create realistic growth goals for preschool enrollment. We recommend beginning the learning process with Lorain County's three existing early childhood collaboratives (Oberlin Kids, Ready Set Go to Kindergarten, and Rising Titans).

4. **Make pre-school through college (P-20) education advocacy a priority.** P-20 is used to describe an integrated education system that extends from pre-school through higher education. The goal of P-20 is to help **create a more seamless and integrated education experience for all students that extends beyond high school** – whatever that is – college or a certificate/licensure (i.e., employability credentials) that lead to in high-demand, high-paying jobs or careers.
  
5. **Recruit and hire more educators of color.** In order to increase the number of teachers and administrators that “look like” the students they serve, we must first **increase the number of Black and Brown students pursuing careers in education.**

# HOUSING

## Summary

Fair Housing is protected by the Fair Housing Act. The Act “protects people from discrimination when they are renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities. Additional protections apply to federally-assisted housing. **The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of Race, Color, National Origin, Religion, Sex, Familial Status, and Disability.**” Most housing is covered under the Act, except in limited circumstances for owner-occupied small buildings with less than 4 units, or single-unit homes for rent by owner without an agent, and housing provided by religious organizations or private clubs which limit housing to members. This list is used as a benchmark for assessing the status of impediments to fair housing in Lorain County.

## Next Steps

- Promote access by **increasing the availability of affordable housing**, prioritizing funds for demolition and repair, and addressing Source of Income discrimination
- Provide opportunities for **training, education and networking on Fair Housing Law** and best practices for county/city staff on an ongoing basis.
- Identify ways that to **extend and improve transportation**

## Impediments to Fair Housing

Through analysis of data, community input, and interviews as appropriate, the following impediments *Adapted from: City of Lorain's Impediments to Fair Housing Study, Cleveland State University. Ms. Kirby Date 2021*):

- **Public Transportation. Create better and easily accessible Public Transportation in Lorain County.** Access to public transportation is severely limited in Lorain County. In **low-income neighborhoods where many residents do not have access to a car, this can effectively limit their access to jobs, school, and community amenities, and force long travel times.** The situation is made even more difficult for seniors and persons with disabilities who may not drive a car. Lorain County has a Public Transit Advocacy Director and organization, working to create better public transit in the county. Updates and information can be found on the website and by contacting Sharon Pearson, Mobility Coordinator (<http://www.MOVELorainCounty.org/>)
- **Source of Income Discrimination Policy.** Even when decent, affordable housing is available, **source of income discrimination limits housing choice for Housing Choice Voucher holders,** preventing them from living in choice neighborhoods.
- **Availability of Affordable Housing.** The availability of affordable housing was identified in the past Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing as an impediment limiting housing choice in the county. The county has made great strides in prioritizing neighborhood stabilization, and improving flexibility for housing choice and affordable and accessible housing location. **Current new housing projects in the pipeline will continue this trend by providing additional affordable housing** throughout the county.
- **Housing Rehabilitation and Blight Removal.** Demolition of blighted and abandoned housing, and rehabilitation of existing housing in poor condition, has been identified by the community as a priority to improve the quality of housing and neighborhoods in the county. **This is especially important in lower-income neighborhoods which have been hardest hit by decades-old trends of housing abandonment, deferred maintenance, absentee landlords, and property disrepair.**
- **Availability of Fair Housing Data.** As noted in the previous Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing, **improved fair housing data will help the county to assess the nature of fair housing impediments** and design appropriate action steps to address them.
- **Information, Education and Outreach.** Fair Housing Education and outreach makes a difference in enabling residents to take action when they experience discrimination. The community survey indicated that the majority of respondents are unfamiliar with Fair Housing Laws; and that **even when they do experience discrimination, they are not confident that reporting it will be convenient and will have any effect.** With a large population of Spanish speakers, ensuring good communication is an important issue for the county, especially in the Cities of Elyria and Lorain.

## Statistical Analysis: Housing Market

Lorain County has approximately 312,964 residents. Of that, 9.0% are Black/ African American, 3.1% are Multiracial, 10.4% are Hispanic and 77.7% are White, non-Hispanic. (census.gov)

The **median household income** in Lorain County currently for all households is \$64,081; median household income: **White \$67,896, Black \$32,840, Multiracial \$36,119, Hispanic/Latinx \$39,219.**

Lorain County's **poverty rate** (percent of individuals in poverty within that racial/ethnic category) is as follows: **Black 40.3%, Hispanic/Latinx 37.3%, White 10.7%** (*Racial Disparities in Lorain County, 2021*)

### Sales Market

The median home value in Lorain in November 2021 was \$109,000 (realtor.com), whereas the states' median home value was \$192,352 (zillow.com). A home for some families represents household wealth and often represents the most significant asset on a household's balance sheet, according to the Survey of Consumer Finances.

However, the **racial gap in the homeownership rate has limited the financial benefits that accrue to Black households, contributing to the broader racial disparity in wealth accumulation.**

### Rental Market

Some studies have covered up the racial disparities by labeling the issues in the Black communities under the banner of poverty. Pointing the blame for the lack of affordable housing is due to the transient nature of people in poverty. **Rent in Lorain County is also considered to be inexpensive, with median rent averaging \$688 per month, compared with the national median rent rate of \$1,419 per month.** More than half of all renters are paying rates that are considered a burden to the renter in Lorain County, which is especially notable given the amount of substandard units that exist in cities such as Lorain and Elyria.

## Statistical Analysis: Housing Crisis

- In 2019, the **Black homeownership rate (41%) was the lowest of all racial and ethnic groups.** Between 2000 and 2017, the Black homeownership rate dropped 4.8 percentage points—a loss of about 770,000 Black homeowners—while the homeownership rates of other racial and ethnic groups either remained constant or increased.
- The homeownership gap is larger for low-income households likely because low-income White families, on average, have higher household wealth, and **young White adults are more likely to have access to financial support from their parents. Reducing the income gap would reduce the Black-White homeownership gap by about 9 percentage points.**



- Compared with the overall population, Black adults are significantly more likely than White adults to be homeless. In 2020, **40% of the homeless population were Black and 45% were White**; even though the proportion of Black residents in Lorain County is only 10%.

**More than 50% of White households have a FICO credit score above 700, compared with only 20.6% of Black families.** Thirty-three percent of Black households with credit histories have insufficient credit and lack a credit score, while only 17.9% of White households have missing credit scores. **Black families with a mortgage would increase by 10.6% if their credit score distribution was the same as White households.**

## Recommendations

The following have been identified based on impediments to fair housing (*Adapted from: City of Lorain's Impediments to Fair Housing Study, Cleveland State University. Ms. Kirby Date 2021*):

1. **Identify ways that transportation can be provided and improved, and how key jobs and housing connections can be made.** Continue to work with Lorain County Public Transit, MOVE (Mobility & Opportunity for a Vibrant Economy) Lorain County, and employers to identify Transportation needs and solutions.
2. **Adopt an amendment to the Fair Housing ordinance prohibiting Source of Income discrimination.**
3. **Increase the availability of affordable housing.** Continue to work with local LIHTC developers and others to ensure that a wide range of decent, affordable housing is available throughout the city.
4. **Prioritize funds for demolition and repair. Continue the emergency home repair fund and explore instituting a revolving loan program for rehabilitation.**
5. **Have Fair Housing data available.** Implement a program of Fair Housing testing. Additional key data sources include regular scans of advertisements, and regular review of benchmark data sources such as the Housing Mortgage Act data source.
6. **Provide Fair Housing Education** through multiple channels such as **flyers, workshops and training, and outreach to families through schools and faith groups**, outreach through **social service agencies, and public advertising** and public service announcements. Special attention will be paid to **providing Spanish language information and outreach** to limited English speakers whose primary language is Spanish. The convenience of the process for reporting, and the positive results that come from reporting, will be included in information and education. Supportive person-to-person outreach will be accomplished by providing training to providers of social services and faith-based services.
7. **Provide opportunities for training, education and networking on Fair Housing Law and best practices for county/city staff on an ongoing basis.**

# ECONOMIC JUSTICE + WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## Summary

Economic Justice encompasses access to capital, homeownership, and wealth building. **Workforce development focuses on equal opportunity for high-wage jobs and trades, a pipeline to high-paid executive roles, and access to entrepreneurial opportunities.**

The outcome of Economic Justice and Workforce Development would include a community that is committed to advocating for and **promoting equitable outcomes and dismantling systemic barriers to economic advancement** for Black and Brown people in Lorain County.

This community would make informed decisions based on effective measures and evaluations, **ensure small business support services for Black- and Brown-owned businesses and residents in marginalized communities**, and provide access to social, physical, and financial capital that spurs economic advancement.

## Next Steps

- Create value alignment and robust connection and **access among community resources**
- Invest first in **neighborhoods with the greatest need**
- **Make racial equity and inclusion foundational**, not separate initiative, in civic and community organizations, and support adoption with incentives and easy administration
- **Design pathways and programs to promote an engaged workforce**: childcare access, a training pipeline, benefits, and pay equity

## Recommendations

1. **Support and encourage the implementation of resident-led neighborhood plans that align with the goals of the Racial Equity Center.**
2. **Build structured communication plans between neighborhood groups and elected officials** (where elected officials are coming to the neighborhood) to ensure a strong and sustainable connection between neighborhood's plans and elected official's funding opportunities and policies.
3. **Encourage investment in neighborhoods with the most need** (as defined by the social determinants of health: **safe housing, transportation, violence, education, job opportunities, access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities**, polluted air/water, language and literacy skills), including **the improvement of the built environment** (cultural-specific and neighborhood branded wayfinding, **connected infrastructure like sidewalks and paths** to help bridge the gap for lack of access), that is in the best-interest of residents.
4. **Create a one-stop shop business and entrepreneurship incubator for Black and Brown businesses that identifies and promotes business opportunities and prepares them to fill those business opportunities gaps and eliminates financial barriers** (cost of certifications, and access to financing/capital). This can be accomplished by **fostering collaboration and alignment between existing small business resources** like SBDC, Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, GLIDE, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, Lorain County Urban League, Co-work spaces, Lorain County Metro Parks, libraries, Main Streets.
5. **Create a pipeline between job seekers and employers.** Include training for local employers in changing their hiring practices to be more equitable ("banning the box," **shifting from degree and experience requirements to skill-based qualifications**, cultural-specific employee resource services).
6. **Meet employees where they are by focusing on recruiting, developing and retaining employees reentering society from prison and other institutions (re-entry), as well as recruiting employees from all levels of the social-economic continuum.** Include investment in employee support groups and services and provide support services for people from the neighborhoods of focus (via navigators and other investments) to ensure they are prepared and positioned to fill job openings. **Provide specialized supports to empower single mothers within the process.**
7. **Ensure financing/capital is available to ease the pathway to entrepreneurship and owning businesses** by encouraging **investment in community banks/investment firms that intentionally support Black and Brown owned businesses** and economic empowerment programs.
8. **Establish and ensure a continuum of pathways into professions and trades. Promote career tech** through JVS/Elyria and Lorain career tech programs and LCCC. **Improve transportation connections** and access points for education and job placement.

9. **Establish incentives and performance measures for equity, diversity and inclusion goals** throughout all local organizations, including senior management, CEO and Board level through supporting research, and accountability.
  
10. **Create a scalable and turn-key suite of diversity, equity and inclusion resources that can easily be adopted by organizations** seeking a roadmap for increased diversity, equity and inclusion, regardless of size or capacity. Include **recruitment and application best practices, governance and policy best practices, ongoing assessment tools, mutual benefit data**, and case studies from allies having success.
  
11. **Create policies to pay equitable wages across demographic groups, ensure adequate childcare for working parents and provide compensation and benefit packages that have suitable healthcare.** This can be accomplished through research and data that organizations are not perpetuating prior discrimination by basing current wages on previous wages.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE + COMMUNITY POLICING

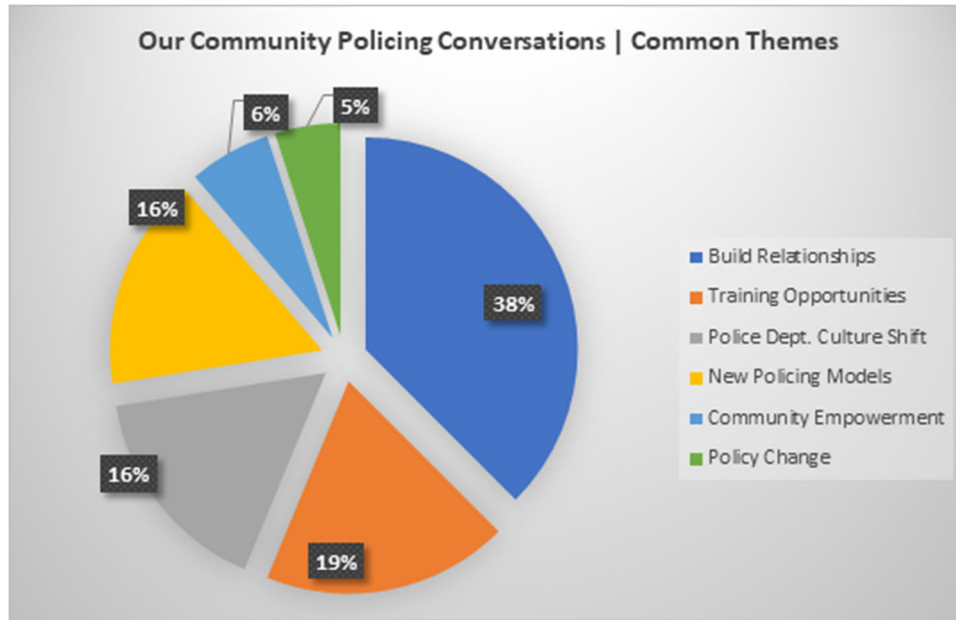
## Summary

In October 2020, the Lorain County Racial Equity Center Criminal Justice/Community Policing Committee began meeting with community stakeholders and police chiefs in Lorain County to discuss community policing and racial equity. These conversations have been an opportunity to evaluate our current practices and relationships, and to begin thinking about how we can create an environment in Lorain County that better supports and creates racial equity and equity-based community policing practices. **We define community policing as a collaborative effort between law enforcement, community members and organizations to support and protect EVERYONE in our community.** These recommendations have been adapted from the *Toledo Black Agenda* (TBA) to address the needs, concerns and identified areas for growth that have arisen from our community because of our conversations over the past year.

“[The Toledo Black Agenda] Criminal Justice/Police Reform report focuses a great deal on law enforcement; not because the other phases of the Criminal Justice System are any less important, because they certainly are, but because the primary impetus for the most recent movement and global outcry for racial justice was ignited as the world watched helplessly as George Floyd was murdered by a police officer right in front of our eyes. This unadulterated view into the everyday reality of so many Black and Brown people in this country sickened many, and motivated countless others. The very entry into the Criminal Justice System occurs at the hands of police officers. **Racism exists in every aspect of our society and in our systematic structures. When analyzed closely, the disparate treatment of Black and Brown individuals by some police officers has a lasting effect that alters their lives** in ways not experienced at the same rate of any other race. There is no question that significant reforms are needed in all phases of the Criminal Justice System” (*Toledo Black Agenda*, p. 3).

## Next Steps

- Create a culture founded on **comprehensive community engagement** and relationship building
- Invest in **restorative justice practices, transparent processes, and relevant training**
- Broaden policing perspective by **diversifying the police force and creating citizen review boards**
- **Revisit and reinvest in neighborhood- level relationships and partnerships** between police and Black and Brown communities



**Additional Themes:** Increasing Knowledge, Department Diversity, Resources, Dialogue, Crime Control, Police Image, Community Engagement

## Recommendations

1. **Assemble a task force, of law enforcement, social services, and grassroots community members to collaborate in reimagining public safety in a way that reduces the presence and need for armed law enforcement** in Black and Brown communities when experiences or behaviors that are inappropriately criminalized (homelessness, substance use) could be better addressed with services and resources that provide more appropriate responses. The Lorain County Racial Equity Institute should host the task force.
2. **Create more opportunities for police officers to engage with youth/students in ways that promote positive relationship-building and greater trust. Investigate steps to reimagine police presence in schools and to promote positive school climates through comprehensive student support services.** This can be accomplished through partnerships with the Reimagining Juvenile Justice (RJJ) committee, juvenile court officials, parents, grassroots community members, social services, and youth and students.
3. **Increase funding for training for police departments to ensure best practices and adequate training requirements are being met each year. Provide special funding to departments solely dedicated to ensuring quality REI, DEI, and implicit bias training to officers.** Police departments in Lorain County struggle to fund and meet their costly training requirements each year. Flawed training compromises the safety of police officers and Black and Brown community members.

4. **Support the creation of a county-wide coalition between police departments and the Police Academy at LCCC** to coordinate and share dollars and resources for trainings each year.
5. **Design and offer a robust racial diversity training program focused on practicing anti-racism, increasing cultural diversity, and reducing implicit bias.** This can be accomplished in partnership with the Lorain County Racial Equity Institute, Lorain County Chiefs Association, the Lorain County Community College Police Academy and other law enforcement associations. **Racial diversity training should be geared towards new officers and offered to other members of the criminal justice system** (such as sergeants, lieutenants, chiefs, judges, prosecutors, probation, and parole officers). The training should begin with Racial Equity and Inclusion courses that focus on the history of law enforcement (including slave codes). Additionally, the training program should offer opportunities for members of the criminal justice system to continually learn about and **monitor potential signs of implicit bias within their own departments.** Lastly, **the training program should offer procedural fairness workshops that will acclimate those working in the criminal justice system to greater levels of cultural sensitivity.**
6. **Build trust and promote a culture of transparency.** Law enforcement agencies should **make all department policies available for public review** and regularly post the following on the department's website: information about traffic stops, summonses, arrests, reported crime, and other law enforcement data aggregated by demographics (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. 2015. Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services).
7. **Establish Citizen Review Boards and recruit community members that are representative of the demographics in their respective cities.**
8. **Create avenues for community engagement and collaboration between police officers and Black and Brown community members to determine together a balance between accountability for criminal activity and safety for law abiding citizens living in over-policed neighborhoods.** Often, the two are treated as the same. Trust must be restored in the police by establishing community-based models that seek to protect and serve ALL members of any community through fair and humane interactions. Community members need to see that police officers have a vested interest in seeing the community thrive, not just a police presence.
  - a. **Develop greater partnerships between police officers and block watches.**
  - b. **Create opportunities for dialogue between community members and police officers in over-policed neighborhoods.**
  - c. **Invest in neighborhood engagement initiatives** that promote community empowerment (restoring the community from the inside out).
9. **Invest in more restorative justice practices,** focusing heavily on community support for Black and Brown community members who are reentering society (i.e., restore voting rights, work to create programs for securing housing, create programs for securing employment)

- 10. Commit to hire, appoint, and elect more Black and Brown people in critical roles in law enforcement,** the courts and judicial system, such as, judges, magistrates, bailiffs, police officers, prison administrators and workers as well as prosecutors, to name a few.
  
- 11. Promote relationship building between police and the Black and Brown communities by having officers, police/patrol in areas they live so that they get to know community members and community members get to know them.** Additionally, support and fund more initiatives such as El Centro’s cultural diversity training for police officers. This will allow Black and Brown community members and police officers to come together, learn about one another and **create shared understandings and expectations of community policing in specific neighborhoods.**



# COMMUNITY HISTORY

## Summary

History is a throughline that connects the various areas of focus documented in this report. While declaring racism a public health crisis is a critical first step toward realizing racial equity, without a detailed understanding of the history of systemic racism in particular local and broader national contexts, structural inequalities are easily replicated and the status quo maintained. Historical narratives of the region tend to emphasize the arrival of Black people in Lorain County during the late 19th-early 20th century period of the so-called “Great Migration,” a framing of Black migration from South to North that is characterized by people seeking economic opportunity. This narrative and periodization overlook the fact that many who emigrated at this time were actually refugees fleeing racialized violence and persecution in the South who struggled to find opportunities and faced further discrimination upon arrival.

This account of Black migration is largely absent from the existing official histories of Lorain County. Indeed, as in many places in the United States, this history of violence against Black Americans has been repressed and whitewashed. **During the summer of 2020, the Lorain County Racial Equity Institute History Committee began an original research project that centers Black History of Lorain County as an historical groundwork** on which the Lorain County Racial Equity Institute can build training and support the center's mission. In support of this initiative, in 2021 the Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching & Research at Oberlin College partnered with StoryLens to launch the Groundwater Project (see description below). This history has been largely undocumented, but preliminary research points to a significant and remarkable history that extends back well into the 19th century and earlier.

There are Black elders in Lorain County who have lived this history and who carry the memories of their ancestors’ experiences, and there is a wealth of resources—photographs, newspaper clippings, family albums and stories—through which to paint a more accurate picture of the Black experience here, but to date there has been no formal effort to preserve and document this history. The need to tell this story is urgent, for soon, many of these elders, and their stories, will be lost to time. The aims of **this community research and of the Groundwater Project will align with or contribute to those of the Lorain County Racial Equity Institute by elucidating and making Black history central to the regional historical narrative.**

## Next Steps

- **Provide original research** that focuses on the Black History of Lorain County
- **Produce a single feature-length documentary film** or a series of short documentary films that tell the story of Lorain County through a lens of racial equity by gathering oral histories, historical artifacts, and creating a publicly accessible digital database.

## Black Life and History in Lorain County

Specific, significant themes and sources related to Black life and history in Lorain County that demand further investigation include:

- The period prior to the founding of Lorain County in 1822 and through 1865, particularly as it relates to Lake Erie as an important site of Black religious life, activism, and **escape by way of the maritime Underground Railroad to Canada**;
- The post-Civil War emergence of a Black elite in Lorain County between 1865 and the 1920s, when historian Carol Lasser sees the color line descending in Oberlin and throughout greater Lorain County, as evident in **documentation of residential and other forms of segregation**;
- The period from the 1930s through the end of WWII, into the 1950s, when **people pushed back against segregation in schools and public relief**, while nurturing Black businesses;
- The **activism and civic engagement of women**, embodied, for example by Margaret Barnes, listed in the census records as “Washerwoman,” who was also a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute, was active in the Lorain County Federation of Black Women’s Clubs, served as president of the Ohio Federation of Women’s Clubs and was appointed to the Board of Trustees for Wilberforce where a building on the campus bears her name; and similar developments of organizations for Black men including as well a Black Lodges (e.g. Prince Halls), Oddfellows, and American Legions;

## The Groundwater Project

The Groundwater Project, directed by Geoff Pingree and Jeannine Donaldson, will proceed in two parts.

### The Public Archive

StoryLens, with the support of community partners, will **gather oral histories of Black residents in Lorain County**. We will store these histories and other archival materials (such as personal photographs, news articles, letters) in a publicly accessible database. In our work, we use the term “oral history” broadly to refer to a practice of audiovisual documentation in which we prioritize the informed consent of interviewees at all stages of the interview and archival process. Our approach combines elements of traditional documentary filmmaking with methods and principles of oral history gathering established by the Oral History in the Liberal Arts Initiative (<https://ohla.info>).

The Groundwater Project team, trained in workshops conducted by oral historian and OHLA Project Lead Brooke Bryan, will coordinate and conduct interviews with the help of Oberlin College students and members of the local community. As we collect, organize, and catalog additional archival materials, we will be assisted by Lorain County Community College students. StoryLens and OHLA will host the archive temporarily, until we can find a permanent home – at the Lorain County Racial Equity Center, Lorain County Community College, or another local institution whose mission and purpose are aligned with the goals of the Groundwater Project. We believe **it is essential that this archive of stories and archival materials be rooted in and available to the local community**. Indeed, we hope the Groundwater Project will initiate an ongoing and organic process of story-gathering and recording in Lorain County that will continue to grow as more oral histories are documented.

## Film Work

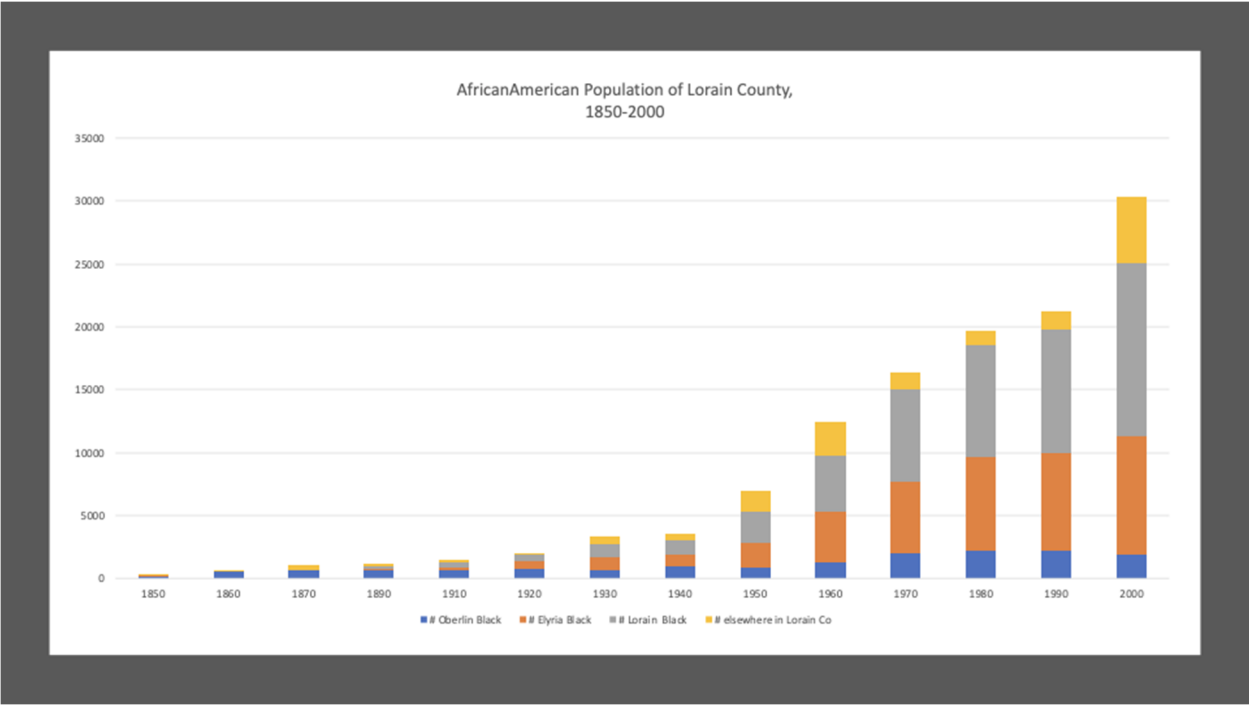
Drawing on the oral histories and archival materials and on additional visual resources from Lorain County residents, StoryLens will produce a single feature-length documentary film or a series of short documentary films that will explore the history of race in Lorain County over the past 100 years. We will begin work as soon as we begin building the public archive, and our decisions about the length, format, and structure of the film/s will be shaped by the nature and content of the stories and other materials we gather, by the audiences we intend to reach, but mostly by what will best **provide an honest, responsible, accessible narrative of a systematically neglected history**. In this, we aim to raise awareness of the racial inequity that pervades our community and to preserve and honor the experiences of those most directly affected.

## StoryLens

StoryLens and its partners have begun locating and communicating with individuals and organizations within Lorain County that can illuminate this history. The interviews and additional materials we gather will support our work, to be sure, but beyond that, they will be part of a much broader permanent and accessible public archive that will serve future scholarly, artistic, and community work. As we move forward, we hope to engage in a **respectful, trust-building process of collaborative, community storytelling**.

## Recommendations

1. **Provide original research that focuses on the Black History of Lorain County** through funding and advisory support of the Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching & Research at Oberlin College, and Historian Carol Lasser.
2. **Produce a single feature-length documentary film or a series of short documentary films that tell the story of Lorain County through a lens of racial equity by gathering oral histories, historical artifacts, and creating a publicly accessible digital database.** This can be accomplished with the support of the Bonner Center, StoryLens (<https://storylens.org>), and by launching the Groundwater Project.



# WORKING GROUP + SUB-COMMITTEES

## Working Group

- Jeanine Donaldson, Director Elyria YWCA and Co-chair LCREC
- Cindy Andrews, President and CEO Lorain County Community Foundation
- Ryan Aroney, CEO United Way
- Jack Bradley, Mayor City of Lorain
- Assata Cheers, Elyria YWCA and Community Foundation
- David Covell, CEO Lorain County Health Department
- Denise Douglas, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Dean, Social Sciences and Human Services, LCCC
- Anthony Gallo, CEO Lorain County Chamber
- A.G. Miller, Bd Member Community Foundation
- Patricia O'Brien, CEO Stocker Foundation
- Fallon Peterson, Nord Family Foundation
- Cecilia Render, CEO Nordson Corp. Foundation
- Catherine Woskobnick, Director Mercy Health

## Health Care Equity & Justice Sub-Committee

- Mark Adams, CEO, Lorain County Health Department
- Tania Boster, [TBOSTER@oberlin.edu](mailto:TBOSTER@oberlin.edu), The Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching & Research at Oberlin College
- Dave Covell, CEO, Lorain County Health Department (former)
- Monica Norfus, [mnorfus@lorainccc.edu](mailto:mnorfus@lorainccc.edu), Lorain County Community College
- Vivian Taylor, [vtaylor@loraincountyhealth.com](mailto:vtaylor@loraincountyhealth.com), Lorain County Public Health
- Catherine Woskobnick, Director Mercy Health

## Education Sub-Committee

- Denise Douglas, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Dean, Social Sciences and Human Services, LCCC
- Jill Henes, Early Childhood Educator, Hamilton Elementary School, Elyria City Schools
- Michele Henes, Director, Children's Learning Center, Lorain County Community College
- Patricia O'Brien, Executive Director, The Stocker Foundation
- Cecilia Render, Executive Director, Nordson Corporation Foundation

## Housing Sub-Committee

- Drew Crawford, Planning and Zoning Administrator Department of Building, Housing and Planning, City of Lorain
- Fallon Peterson, Program Officer the Nord Family Foundation
- Max Upton, Director of Building, Housing, Planning City of Lorain

## **Economic Justice and Workforce Development Sub-Committee**

- Cynthia Andrews, President and CEO Lorain County Community Foundation
- Ryan Aroney, CEO United Way
- Keith Brown, LCCC
- Alexis Clark-Amison, Elyria YWCA
- Tony Gallo, CEO Lorain County Chamber of Commerce
- Eboni A. Johnson, Oberlin City Council
- Mike Longo, Director Lorain County Workforce Development Agency
- Sharon Pearson, Manager Lorain County Mobility, United Way of Greater Lorain County
- Regan Phillips, MHARS Board
- Kyle Rose, V.P. Avient Corporation

## **Criminal Justice/Community Policing Sub-Committee**

- Cynthia Andrews, President and CEO Community Foundation of Lorain County
- Miyah Byers (CFLC) Fellow Community Engagement
- Denise Douglas, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Dean, Social Sciences and Human Services, LCCC
- A.G. Miller (CFLC) Chair Community Engagement
- Ryan Warfield, Chief of Police, Oberlin Police Department
- Tim Williams, City of Elyria

## **Community History Sub-Committee**

- Tania Boster, Director, Bonner Center
- Miyah Byers, (CFLC) Fellow Community Engagement
- Denise Douglas, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Dean, Social Sciences and Human Services, LCCC
- Carol Lasser, Historian Retired, Oberlin College
- Geoff Pingree, Cinema Dept., Oberlin College

## **Community Participants**

- Richard Bosley, Chief, Avon Police
- Sue Bowers, Community Foundation of Lorain County, Board Chairperson
- Rey Carrion, Community Foundation of Lorain County, Governance Chair
- Assata Cheers, Former Community Foundation of Lorain County Community Engagement Fellow
- Kevin Donovan, Community Foundation of Lorain County, Vice Chairperson
- Mike Failing, Captain, Lorain Police
- Inez James, MHARS Board Representative
- Brittany Lovett, Community Foundation of Lorain County, Marketing and Communications Officer
- Jim McCann, Chief, Lorain Police
- Jake Morris, Sgt., Lorain Police
- Geoff Pingree, Oberlin College Cinema Dept
- Dan Reinhardt, former Lt., Lorain Police
- Mike Shebak, Community Foundation of Lorain County, Investment Chair
- Linda Styer, Community Foundation of Lorain County, Senior Program Officer

## Touchpoints

- Racial Equity Institute, Charlotte N.C.
- ThirdSpace, Evelyn Burnette
- Policy Bridge, Randall McShepard
- Lisa McDuffie, Toledo Black Agenda
- YWCA OF NW Ohio
- Pittsburgh YWCA Racial Equity Dept.
- Charleston S.C. YWCA Racial Equity Center
- Linda Slocum and Ray English, Oberlin City Council
- Brian Fredricks, Ret. Fdtn Director
- Kevin Boyce, Pres. Franklin County Commissioners
- Shannon Hardin, Pres. Columbus City Council
- Diane Simmons, Elyria City Council
- Michael Doud, CEO MHARS Board
- Dan Haight, Elyria Rotary
- Tim Williams, Lorain Bd. Of Education
- Quentin McCovey, President & CEO Paradigm Investments
- Deloris Baker, Director of Outreach Lo. Co Urban League
- Victor Leandry, Executive Director El Centro De Servicios Sociales
- Mark Ballard, Executive Director WNZN Urban Radio
- Darnell Davis, Outreach Director Boy Scouts USA
- Farah Emeka, Oberlin Bd. Of Education
- Frank Whitfield, Mayor City of Elyria
- Claudia Jones, President Oberlin Unit NAACP
- Brenda Davis, Elyria City Council
- Diane Simmons, Elyria City Council
- Andrew Lipian, Elyria City Council
- Deborah Cocco, League of Women Voters Oberlin
- Pamela Carter, Lorain City Council
- JoAnn Moon, Lorain City Council

# RESOURCES

## Health Equity

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Fred M. Feinson, MD, DSc, MPH, CMD, and Cathy Wagner, RN, MSN, MBA, CHPN, CLNC; *Annals of Long-Term Care, Volume 16 - Issue 1 - January 2008 - ALTC*

Most often systemic racism and institutional racism are used interchangeably and is done so within this document

Systemic/Institutional Racism is defined by the Aspen Institute policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor, or put a racial group at a disadvantage.

COVID-19 Ohio Minority Health Strike Force Blueprint, 2020, page 8

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Sanchez, Tatiana; *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 8;20/2020; *Does Racism Make Us Sick?* Shaw, Gina; *Neurology Today*, 7/9/2020; *It's a Public Health Crisis-How Systemic Racism Can Be Neurotoxic for Black Americans*

Wilkerson, Isabel, Caste, *The origins of our Discontents*, pp. 188

Hoffman, Kelly M., et al., Racial Bias in Pain Assessment and Treatment Recommendations and False Beliefs about Biological Differences Between Blacks and Whites, *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences*, 113, April 19, 2016.

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THANKS TO OUR  
STEERING COMMITTEE  
AND SUPPORTERS



**Lorain County  
Public Health**  
For the Health of Us All

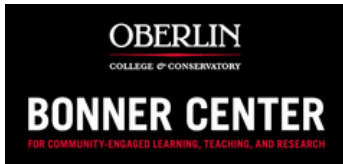
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MERCY HEALTH**



**Mental Health,  
Addiction & Recovery  
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Lorain County**



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*Lorain County  
Community College*



eliminating racism  
empowering women  
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of Greater Lorain County



Community Foundation  
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**LORAIN COUNTY  
RACIAL EQUITY AGENDA**

**JUNE 2022**