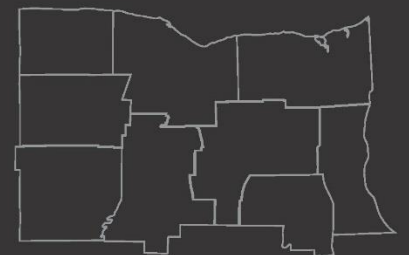




# Hard Facts Update:

Race and Ethnicity  
in the Nine-County  
Greater Rochester Area

AUGUST 2020



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*\*The cover design is intended to provide a visualization of the ethnic composition that makes up the nine-county region.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. Introduction

What is your impression of our community – the greater Rochester community? We know that our region has many generous and caring people, many effective organizations, resources, and community assets. Yet, something is profoundly wrong.

Many people are surprised to learn that we are one of America’s most racially segregated communities: We have some of the most segregated schools; we have one of the greatest income disparities in America based on race and ethnicity; we have one of the country’s greatest concentrations of poverty<sup>1</sup>.

One national study looking at opportunities for children classified greater Rochester as a “hoarder,” a place with a lot of resources but tremendous inequality in the distribution of those resources (see p. 11). In fact, this study found the Rochester metro area to be the number one “hoarder” in the entire U.S. Another study of inequality found that the disparity of income between African Americans and Latinos and Whites in Monroe County to be the fifth highest in the United States out of more than 3,100 counties (see p. 19).

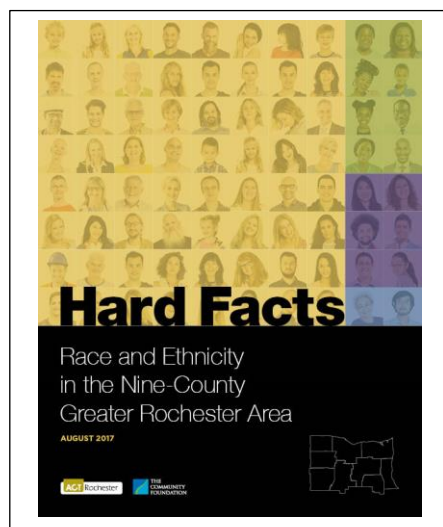
While these findings are provocative, they are not surprising given the long-documented disparities and inequalities between people of different races and ethnic groups. The idea that, as a community, we are hoarders is hard to understand and accept. Yet reviewing our community’s history reveals that intentional decisions and policy choices by generations of Rochester’s leadership have caused gradual and sustained urban development patterns that very effectively divided us by race and then systematically deprived areas of the community occupied by African Americans and, later, Latinos and more recent migrant populations. This pattern is not unique to Rochester but is more intense and more entrenched here than in most places.

This pattern of separation and disparate outcomes not only challenges our sense of justice, it also presents major impediments to achieving regional prosperity. We pay a price in taxes to compensate for our lack of equitable outcomes. More importantly, we pay a bigger price in not fully benefiting from the individual and social capital of all our people. Section 6 of this report analyzes the question: “Does this matter?” The answer is both obvious and not so obvious: This matters greatly – to us all!

This report updates and expands the original *Hard Facts* of 2017. All data have been updated and the report includes observations and analysis in each section.

Like the original, *Hard Facts 2020* seeks to create a deeper knowledge of the disparities confronting African Americans and Latinos in the greater Rochester area. The report aspires to see such knowledge lead to deeper understanding and ultimately to real solutions. The report poses two fundamental questions

1. How do the outcomes for African Americans and Latinos compare with Whites within the nine-county Rochester region<sup>2</sup>?
2. How do the outcomes for African Americans and Latinos in the nine-county Rochester region compare nationwide and in New York State?



Indicators are presented in four categories: Child Health and Well-being; Education Testing Outcomes; Economic Well-being; and Housing and Intergenerational Wealth. These indicators were selected because they reflect impacts over the life cycle of individuals and families and because they are from reputable government sources that are updated regularly and have available detail by race and ethnicity.<sup>3</sup>

Before discussing the report's findings, a word of caution. This report contains many statistical comparisons between racial and ethnic groups. As author Ibram Kendi reminds us, such comparisons should never be viewed as supporting any kind of racial hierarchy. Instead, if we accept the inherent equality of all races and ethnic groups, the outcomes must logically be seen as resulting from policies and practices of our society, both at a national and local level<sup>4</sup>. If we accept the inherent equality stipulated above, then *equity* requires us to redress historical wrongs and attend to closing these disparities.

## ***B. Disparities Within the Region***

So, how do the outcomes for African Americans and Latinos compare with Whites within the nine-county Rochester region? The gaps are troubling.

### Child Health and Wellbeing

- African Americans are 2½ times more likely than Whites to give birth to low-weight babies; Latinos are twice as likely (only Monroe County data is available).
- For infant mortality, African American children are 3 times more likely to die before age one than Whites, while Latino children are about twice as likely (only Monroe County data is available).
- African American children are nearly 4 times more likely to experience child poverty than Whites, while for Latino children the likelihood is slightly more than 3 times more.

### Education Testing Outcomes

- For the foundational Grade 3 English Language Arts, the African American passing rate is slightly less than half (48%) that of Whites, while Latino students tested at slightly more than half (52%).
- For Grade 3 Math, test results were very similar, with African American students at 49% of Whites while Latino students tested at 54%.
- Results for Grade 8 English showed a greater gap, with African American students testing at 35% of the rate for Whites, while Latino students scored at 42%.
- Graduation rates for African American and Latino students have improved in recent years, and both now stand at about 80% of the White rate.

### Economic Outcomes

- Compared with Whites in the region, African Americans are almost 3 times as likely to be unemployed, 3 times as likely to live in poverty, and earn incomes that are less than half of Whites in the region.
- Compared with non-Latino Whites, Latinos are 2½ times as likely to be unemployed and 3 times as likely to experience poverty, while earning incomes that are slightly higher than half (53%) of Whites in the region.

### Housing and Intergenerational Wealth

- Compared with Whites, African Americans are dramatically less likely to own homes (32% versus 73%); pay a higher percent of income for rent (44% compared with 30%); and, for those who do own homes, realize values that are at only 59% of White homeowners.



- For Latinos, the outcomes are similar: Homeownership is lower (35% compared with 73%); rent burdens are higher (44% of income versus 30%); and home values are lower (68% of White homeowners).

### **C. Comparing Our Region to the U.S. and NY State**

The nine-county Rochester region consists of a large city, three small cities, sprawling suburbs, and extensive rural areas. As such, it is a microcosm of the United States (see p. 7). We would expect outcomes for African Americans and Latinos in our region to be very similar to those in the U.S., but they are not! Compared with African Americans in the U.S., African Americans in the nine-county Rochester region:

- Are more likely to be in poverty (34% compared with 24%);
- Their children are more likely to be in poverty (49%, versus 35%);
- Are more likely to experience unemployment (13.8% compared with 10.6%);
- Have lower incomes (75 cents on the dollar compared with the nation);
- Are less likely to own a home (32% versus 42%);
- Pay a higher percent of income for rent (44% compared to 35%); and
- Own homes of a lower value (less than 50% of the nationwide value).

Education testing outcomes are based on NY State tests. Compared with African American students in NY State, those in the nine-county Rochester region:

- Had a lower passing rate for Grade 3 English Language Arts (25% compared with 45%), and Grade 3 Math (28% versus 43%);
- Had a lower passing rate in Grade 8 English (17% compared with 37%); and
- Had a slightly lower graduation rate (72% versus 75%).

**Latinos** also lag their counterparts in the nation by significant margins. Interestingly, while outcomes for Latinos within the region are generally slightly better compared with African Americans, the gaps between local and national Latinos are generally about the same or worse. Latinos here:

- Are more likely to be in poverty (32% compared with 21%);
- Their children are more likely to be in poverty (40% versus 28%);
- Are more likely to experience unemployment (10.8% compared with 6.8%);
- Have lower incomes (66 cents on the dollar compared with the nation);
- Are less likely to own a home (35% versus 47%);
- Pay a higher percent of income for rent (44% compared to 32%); and
- Own homes of a lower value (about 46%).

Compared with Latino students in NY State, those in the nine-county Rochester region:

- Had a lower passing rate for Grade 3 English Language Arts (27% compared with 43%), and Grade 3 Math (31% versus 43%);
- Had a lower passing rate in Grade 8 English (20% compared with 39%); and
- Had the same graduation rate (75%).

## ***D. Observations and Analysis***

The outcome inequalities noted here are startling and sometimes vexing. For every deficit indicator – poor health, poverty, unemployment, rent burdens – African Americans and Latinos have rates that are meaningfully higher than Whites. For every asset measure – educational testing results, income, and homeownership – African Americans and Latinos have outcomes that often are dramatically lower than Whites.

As stark as the disparities are within the region, the gaps between local African Americans and Latinos and their national or state counterparts are even more concerning. These gaps are a direct result of past and current local patterns of discrimination, such as our legacy of discrimination in manufacturing employment, our zoning exclusion practices and housing discrimination using restrictive racial covenants and redlining, and our community development patterns that have created an exceptional degree of poverty concentration within the City of Rochester. While these practices occurred elsewhere, it is apparent that in degree and impact, they were more intense here.

While many may dismiss past housing discrimination policies as commonplace or distant, African Americans and Latinos likely will continue to grow as a percentage of total population. Therefore, addressing our inequalities has dual importance: economic survival for people who have been marginalized and the need for a collective sense of justice.

## ***E. Changes from Previous Report***

This report updates all of the data from the 2017 *Hard Facts* report. Appendices C and D show the changes, which are generally minor. However, there were encouraging and meaningful changes in some of the education data.

## ***F. Finding a Way Forward***

This report has illustrated many of our region’s most persistent disparities. However, we also recognize that behind every disparity lies an opportunity. It is not the intention of this report to stigmatize people of color or to view them as “problems,” but instead to point out how past decisions meted out on racist terms have created a set of conditions that undermine opportunity in our communities of color. Yet there are tremendous opportunities to revitalize our region and realize Rochester’s promise by recognizing the inherent value and agency in every person and community.

Section 7 of this report suggests new ways to understand and respond to these challenges. It proposes specific individual and collective actions to develop a deeper understanding of the startling inequalities present in our community. This section also proposes establishing action plans to reverse some of the critical manifestations of our inequalities, specifically the concentration of poverty, the concentration of student poverty, the de-concentration of employment, and the deep residential segregation of our community.



## Section 1: INTRODUCTION

### **A. What Kind of Place is This?**

Our community – the greater Rochester community – is a place of great people and great resources. Some of us enjoy a wonderful environment with comfortable homes and neighborhoods and have top-notch health care and excellent schools. Yet this is one of America’s most racially segregated communities; we have some of the most segregated schools; we have one of the greatest racial and ethnic income disparities in America; we have one of the country’s greatest concentrations of poverty. This is the kind of place we are!

While America struggles to respond to police brutality against African Americans brought to light by the Black Lives Matter movement, there is a growing understanding that police misconduct is symptomatic of the deeper issues of racial oppression and discrimination that have plagued America for centuries. More than half a century after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the persistence of dramatic disparities in health, education, income, and housing provide a stark testimony to the impacts of segregation and racism at the personal, institutional, and structural levels. In Rochester and beyond, there is a growing realization that Black Kids Matter; Black Schools Matter; Black Homes Matter; Black Incomes Matter.

### **B. Understanding Race and Ethnicity**

Our understanding of the concept of race continues to evolve. Instead of a fixed biological concept, we now know that human variation results from complex patterns of evolution and adaptation. Observed genetic variations are far outweighed by similarities among all humans. Race is increasingly a social concept, not a biological one<sup>5</sup>.

Ethnicity is also an evolving concept. Ethnicity generally refers to the culture of people from a specific area. That culture may be defined by language, heritage, religion, and customs. But this concept can also be blurry. The son of an Irish father and a German mother may call himself Irish because his name is easily found on an Irish map of such names. But he is no less German than Irish. So, like race, ethnicity also can be seen as a social construct.

As detailed in Appendices A and B, the racial demographics of the nine-county area include people from all of the racial categories included in the Census data collection system. However, this data also shows that more than 97% of regional residents identify themselves as being of one race: White (82.4%); African American (10.6%) or Asian (2.6%).

More than 81,600 regional residents, or 6.8%, identify themselves as being of Hispanic or Latino ethnic background. Latino is not a racial group, and those who identify themselves as Latinos are members of the various racial groups. Because of the significant disparity in economic and social outcomes, the Census Bureau tracks detailed demographic data for Latinos.

This report will focus on the sharp disparities experienced by African Americans and Latinos. As minorities in a larger society, it is remarkable how similar the outcomes are for African Americans and Latinos, and how different these outcomes are when compared with non-Latino Whites.



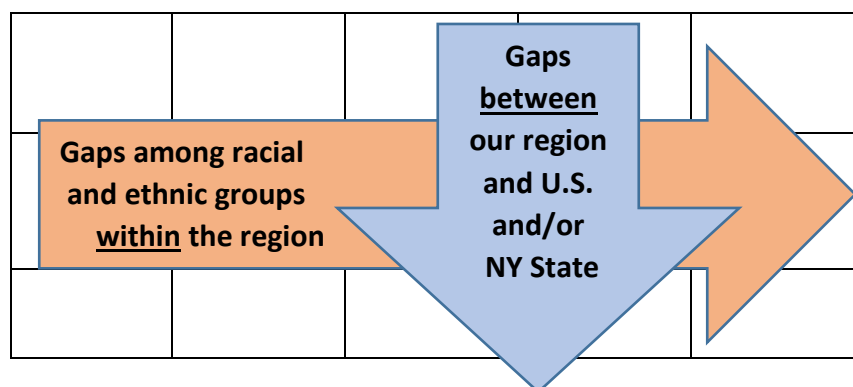
*Image by American Anthropological Association*

This report contains many statistical comparisons between racial and ethnic groups. As author Ibram Kendi reminds us, these comparisons should never be viewed as supporting any kind of racial hierarchy. Instead, if we accept the inherent equality of all, the outcomes must be seen as resulting from policies and practices of our society, both at a national and local level<sup>4</sup>.

### C. Scope and Method of the Report

This study uses the most up-to-date data from authoritative sources to document and analyze the differences in outcomes experienced by individuals and families in the nine-county greater Rochester area<sup>3</sup>. This report looks at the region as a whole and provides comparisons in two directions:

- Outcomes for different racial and ethnic groups within the region; and
- Outcome comparisons for African Americans and Latinos between the Rochester region and the United States and NY State.



This is not a city-suburb comparison. The nine-county area includes four cities, expansive suburban areas, numerous villages, and significant rural areas. As such, the region should be expected to closely mirror national demographics, and it is very close. Median income in our region is at 95% of the national level; poverty data for the region is the same as the national mark; and homeownership rates here are higher than in the U.S. (all data from the U.S. Census, American Community Survey for 2014-18).

	US	Rochester 9-County Region
Median Income	\$60,293	\$57,350
Poverty Rate	14%	14%
Child Poverty Rate	20%	20%
Homeownership Rate	64%	68%

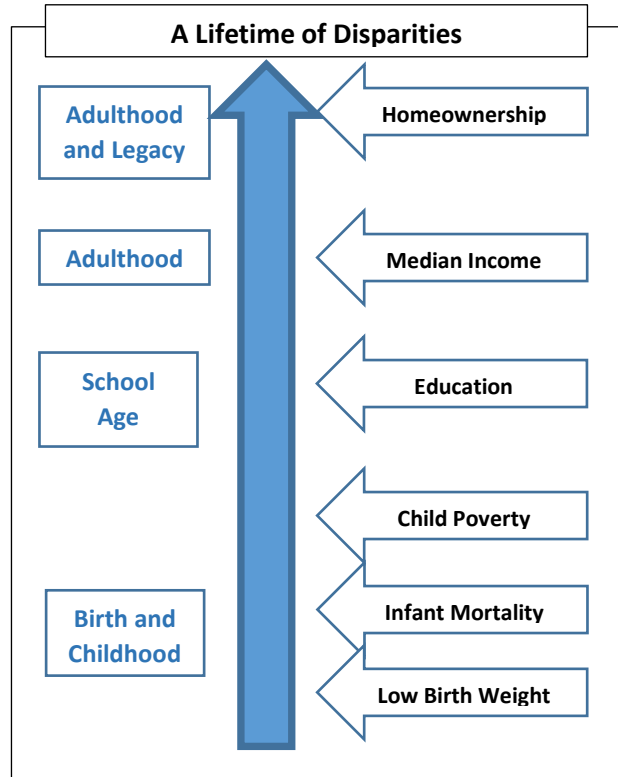
While the region’s overall data reflects that of the nation, the disparities locally for African Americans and Latinos outpace those in the state and nation -- by meaningful margins.

ACT Rochester has been tracking and reporting most of this data in tabular for several years<sup>6</sup> and its website ([ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org)) contains extensive community indicator data as well as links to important community studies and reports (see APPENDIX F).

### D. Summary of Findings

The *Hard Facts* report, first issued three years ago, documented the great disparity between People of Color and Whites *within* our nine-county region. It also detailed startling disparities for People of Color *between* our region and NY state and the nation. This update shows little change in the numbers, and no change in the three basic findings:

1. Disparities impact individuals and families throughout their lives, and even into future generations. Wide gaps exist in child health and well-being; they continue through a child's academic experience; they persist through the working years; and they impact one of the largest sources of intergenerational wealth transfer – home ownership.
2. The gaps between racial and ethnic groups are greater in the Rochester region than in the United States or New York State as a whole.
3. These results have a demonstrable impact on the well-being of the Rochester region.

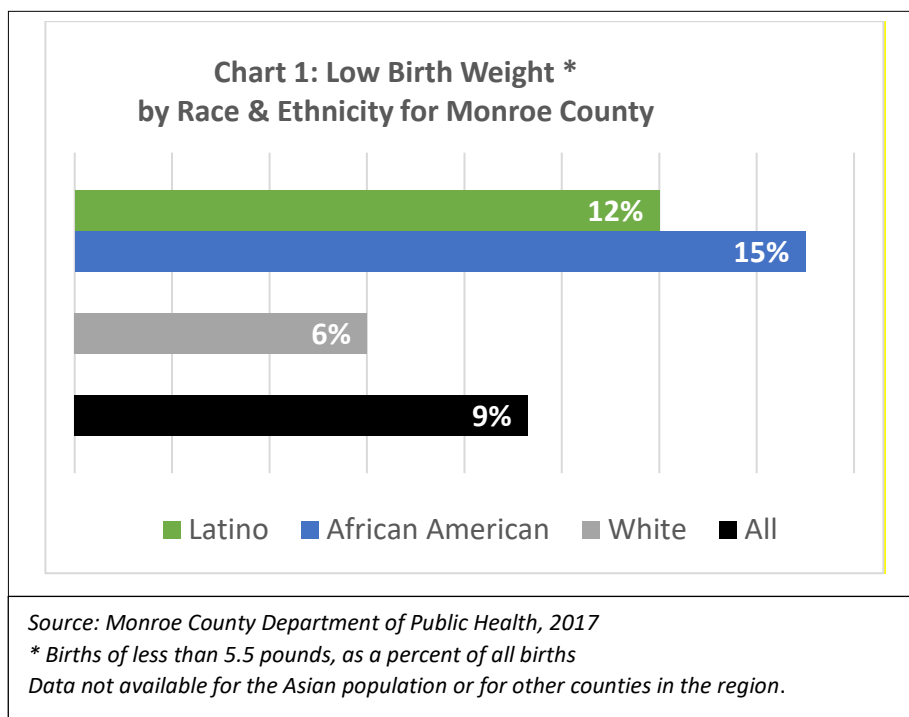


## Section 2: CHILD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### A. Low Birth Weight

Births of less than 5 ½ pounds are a leading indicator of future developmental and neurological problems. In Monroe County, African Americans are 2 ½ times as likely to experience low weigh births as are Whites. The low weight birth rate for Latinos is about 2 times the level of Whites (see Chart 1).

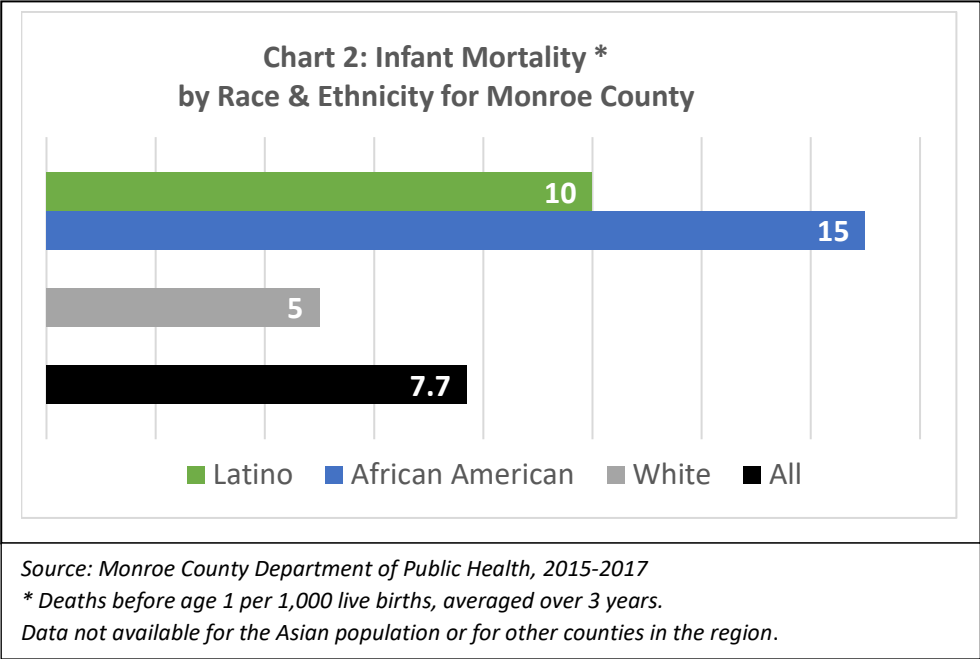
Because we have data only for Monroe County, this indicator does not have comparisons to the U.S. or NY State for people of African American or Latino descent.



### B. Infant Mortality Rate

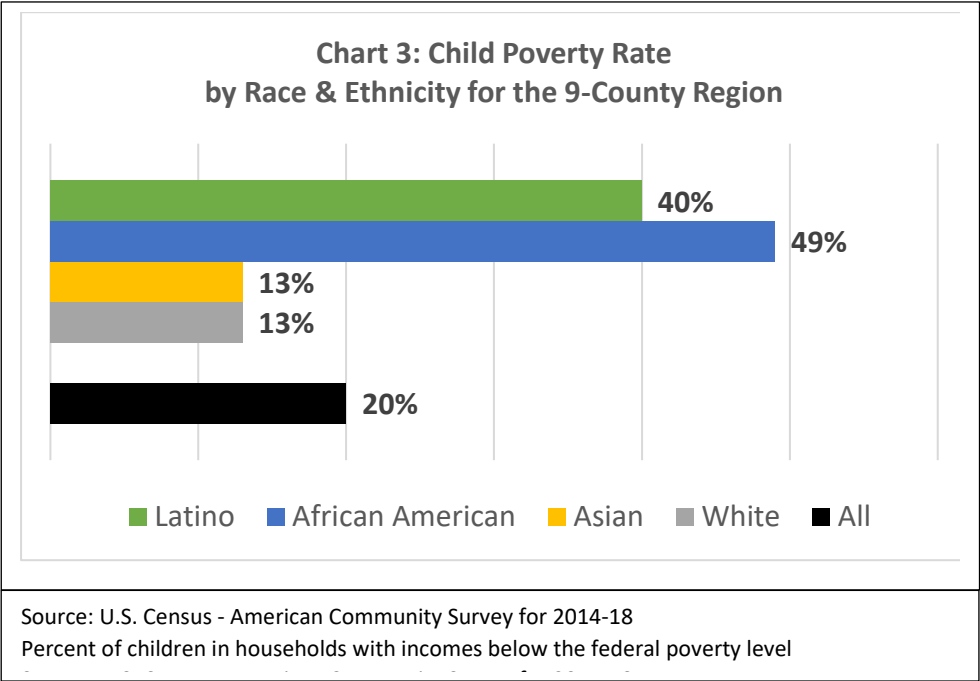
Infant mortality rates measure child deaths before age 1 (as a rate per 1,000 live births). African Americans are 3 times as likely as Whites to experience the tragedy of infant mortality, while Latinos have a rate that is 2 times that of Whites (Chart 2).

Again, because we have data only for Monroe County, this indicator does not have comparisons to the U.S. or NY State for people of African American or Latino descent.

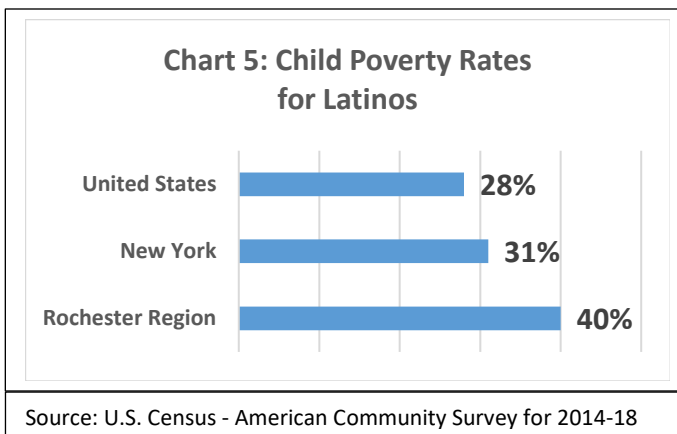
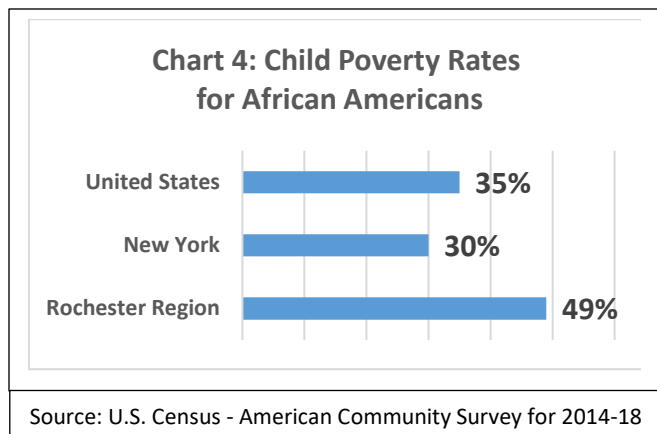


**C. Children in Poverty**

Child poverty rates in the nine-county region show stark differences among racial and ethnic groups, as well as when comparing our region with both NY State and the U.S. For the nine-county region, African American children have a 49% poverty rate, while the rate for Latino children is 40%. The rate for both Whites and Asians is 13% (see Chart 3).



For both African Americans and Latinos, the regional child poverty rates far outpace both those for NY State and U.S. (see Charts 4 and 5).



#### D. Observations and Analysis

As illustrated by the indicators above, the health and well-being of our region’s children is highly correlated with race and ethnicity. Nearly 50% of the nine-county region’s African American children and 40% of the Latino children live below the very low federal poverty level<sup>7</sup>. Both of these marks are significantly higher than the poverty rates for these groups in the U.S. and NY State.

The gaps between Whites and both African Americans and Latinos have increased for both low birth weight and infant mortality since the 2017 *Hard Facts* report. A longer-term view shows that these gaps have persisted for the past 15 years, with occasional (but minor) year-to-year variations.

For child poverty, the gaps within our region continue to be dramatic but narrowed slightly from the 2017 *Hard Facts* report (2 percentage points for African Americans and 3 percentage points for Latinos). Unfortunately, because African American children saw a greater decrease in child poverty elsewhere, the gap between the nine-county Rochester region and both the U.S. and NY State grew by 2 percentage points. The same reality played out for Latino children, with an absolute reduction in poverty but an increase in the gap from Latinos nationwide (2 percentage points) and from NY as a whole (1 percentage point).

This report contains only a few indicators of child health – those that are reported and updated regularly with race and ethnicity detail. For a deeper understanding of health issues and health disparities, readers are encouraged to consult Common Ground Health, the health planning and research organization for the Finger Lakes Region ([CommonGroundHealth.org](http://CommonGroundHealth.org)). Particularly relevant is the work of Common Ground’s African American Health Coalition and Latino Health Coalition. Common Ground documents overall health disparities in terms of premature deaths<sup>8</sup>.

Child well-being is influenced by a range of factors. The organization Diversity Data Kids recently released a comprehensive Child Opportunity Index for the largest 100 metropolitan areas<sup>9</sup>. This analysis uses 29 indicators of education, health and environment, and economic and social well-being to measure opportunities for children’s success. Overall, the Rochester metro area<sup>10</sup> scored reasonably well, just below the top 10 U.S. metros. Alarming, the Rochester metro area recorded the highest disparity between high opportunity and low opportunity neighborhoods in the entire United States.

This finding placed Rochester in a category described by the report as “hoarders,” a place with a lot of resources but tremendous inequality.<sup>11</sup>

<b>Widest Child Opportunity Gap</b>	
<b>Metro Area</b>	<b>Gap</b>
<b>Rochester, NY</b>	<b>94</b>
Detroit, MI	93
Milwaukee, WI	93
Philadelphia, PA	92
Baltimore, MD	91
Buffalo, NY	91
Cleveland, OH	90
Hartford, CT	89
New Haven, CT	89
St. Louis, MO	88
Gap = Difference in opportunity scores between highest and lowest neighborhoods.	

This index is further documentation of the tremendous disparities that exist in our community.

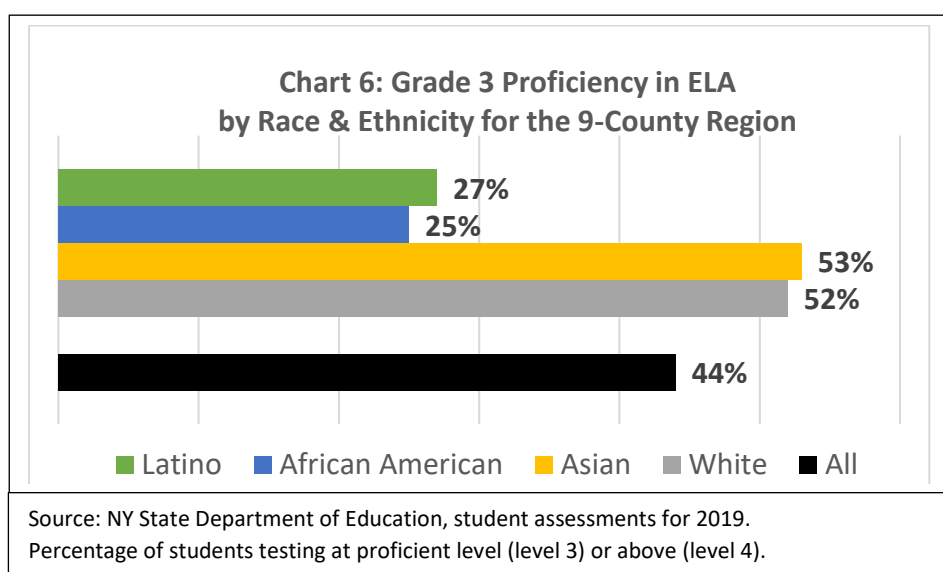


## Section 3: EDUCATION TESTING OUTCOMES

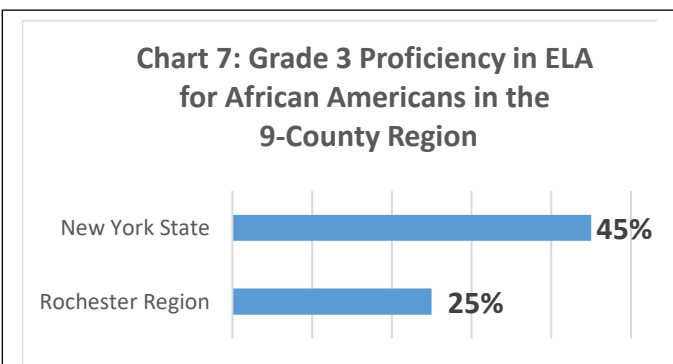
*Editorial Note: This section was labeled “Academic Achievement” in the 2017 Hard Facts report. It has been changed here to be more descriptively accurate<sup>12</sup>. Also, since Grade 8 Math results are not available by race and ethnicity, Grade 3 Math is used here instead. Grade 8 English was shown in an appendix in the 2017 Hard Facts report.*

### A. Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA)

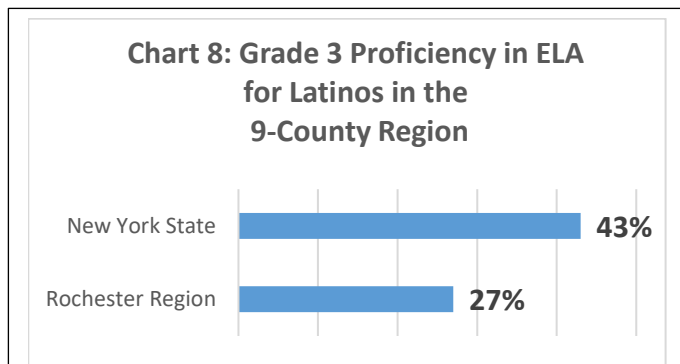
Grade 3 reading level is often cited as a critical milestone in a child’s education. The observation is that if a child can “learn to read” by this point, he or she will be able to “read to learn” in later grades. As shown on Chart 6, only 27% of Latino students and 25% of African American students in the nine-county region achieve this milestone, compared with 52% of White students and 53% of Asian students.



Of crucial concern, Latino and African American students in our region lag behind students of the same groups in NY State, and by a very large margin (Charts 7 & 8). Why would African American students in our region (urban, suburban, rural) succeed at 20 percentage points lower than the rate for African American students throughout NY State (urban, suburban, rural)? The disparity for Latino students is somewhat lower (16 percentage points), but also dramatic and without a ready explanation.



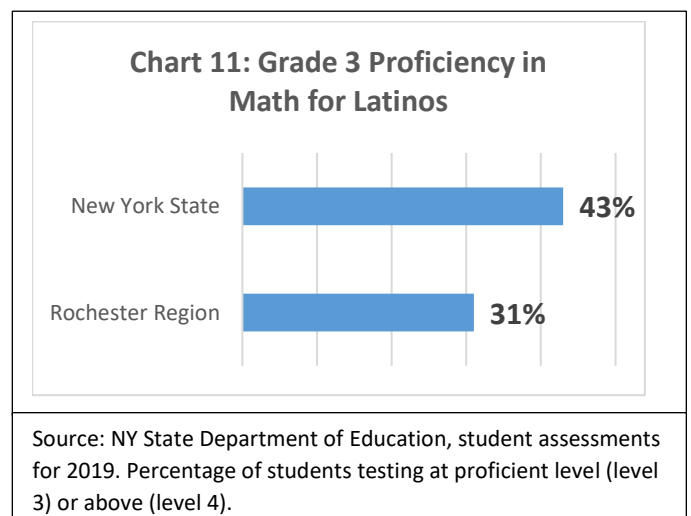
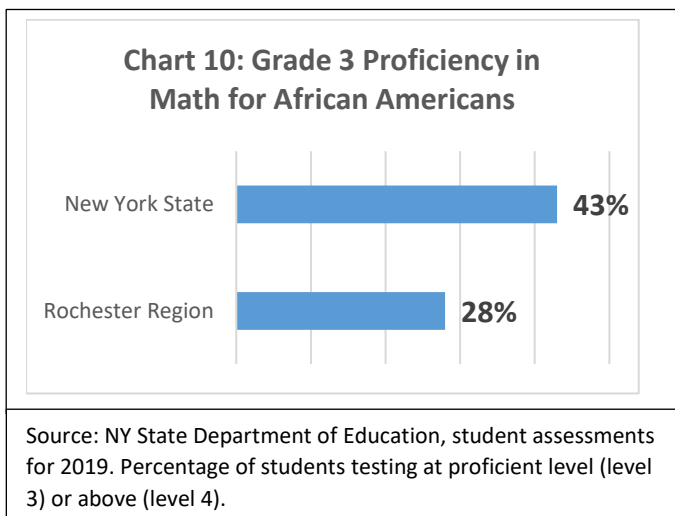
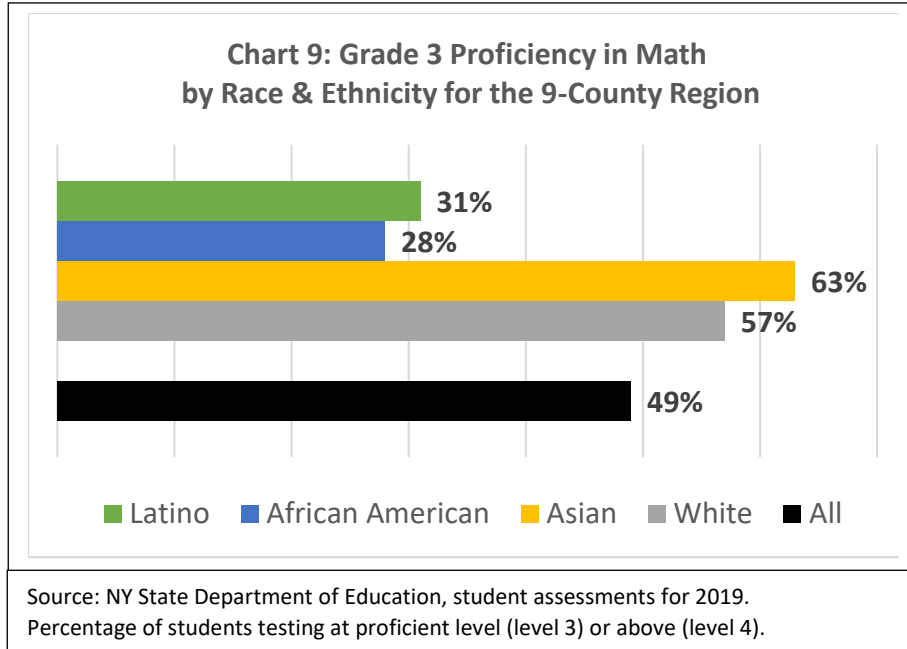
Source: NY State Department of Education, student assessments for 2019. Percentage of students testing at proficient level (level 3) or above (level 4).



Source: NY State Department of Education, student assessments for 2019. Percentage of students testing at proficient level (level 3) or above (level 4).

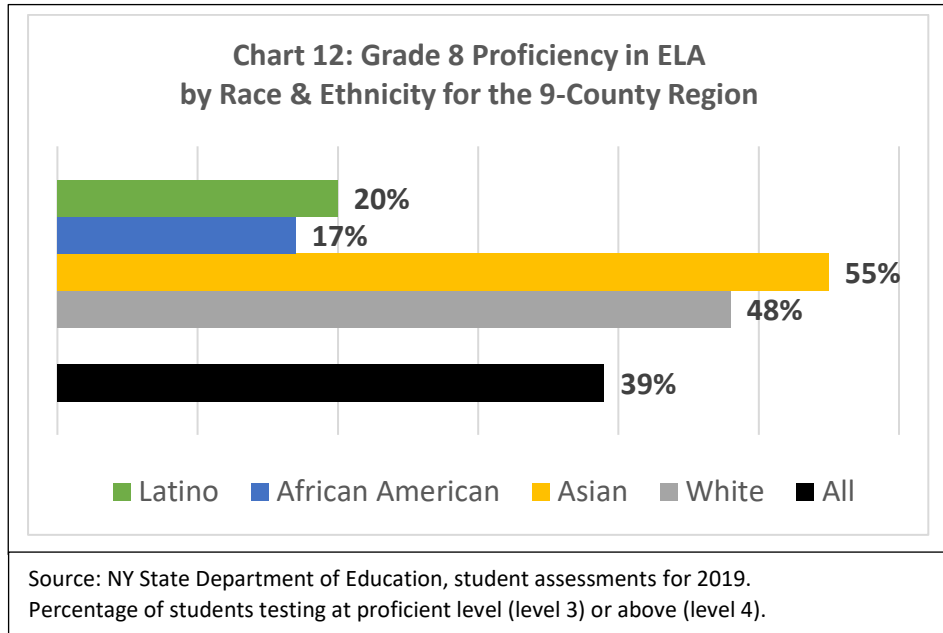
**B. Grade 3 Math**

Looking at Math for Grade 3, we find gaps of a similar magnitude among racial and ethnic groups, and between our region and the state (Charts 9, 10, & 11).

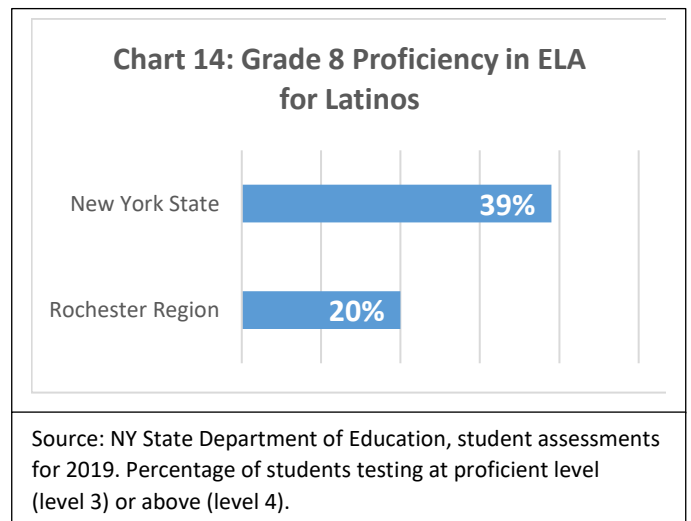
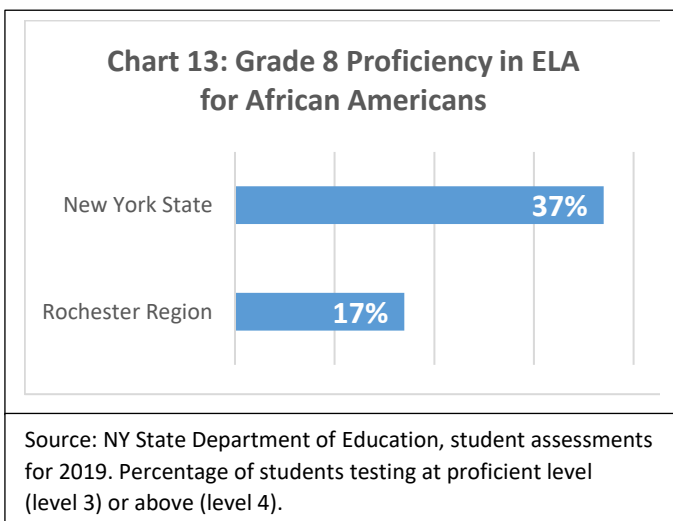


### C. Grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA)

Looking at the other end of the age spectrum, Grade 8 English scores show an even greater disparity among racial and ethnic groups. There is a 31-percentage point gap in the proficiency rate between African Americans and Whites, while there is a 28-percentage point gap between Whites and Latinos (Chart 12).

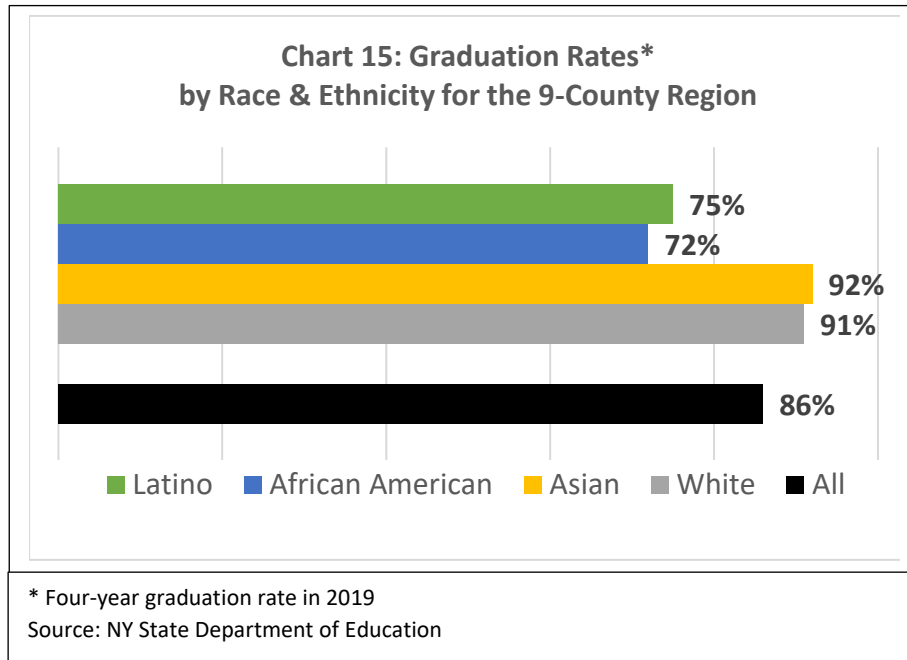


More striking is the gap in Grade 8 results for the same groups in the nine-county Rochester region and NY State as a whole. African Americans in the Rochester region scored at less than half that of African Americans throughout New York, while Latinos locally scored at only slightly more than half the level of Latinos statewide (Charts 13 and 14).

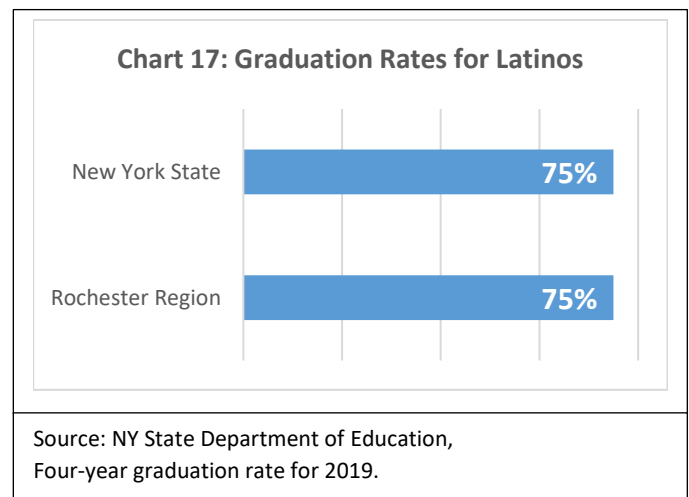
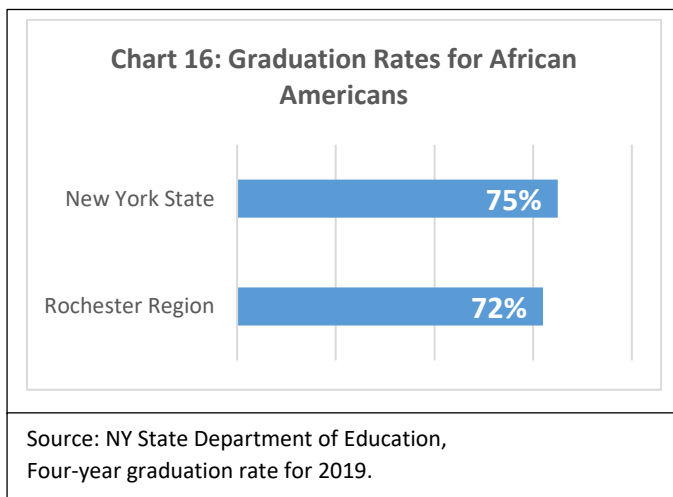


### D. Graduation Rates

In education, much attention is focused on graduation rates. As shown in Chart 15, graduation rates within our region exhibit drastic disparities, though the gaps in graduation rates are somewhat less stark than those for education testing outcomes.



With recent improvements in local graduation rates, the gap for African Americans and their statewide counterparts has narrowed significantly. There currently is no gap for Latinos.



## ***E. Observations and Analysis***

Substantial disparities among racial and ethnic groups within our region continue in all education outcomes. For the most part, the Rochester region's African American and Latino students also lag their statewide counterparts. However, there are meaningful improvements since the 2017 *Hard Facts* report. Absolute test scores and graduation rates for African Americans and Latinos, as well as the gaps between these groups and White students, have improved for all indicators from the 2017 report.

Though still significant, the disparity between African American and Latino students in the Rochester region and their statewide counterparts has narrowed or remained unchanged. Particularly heartening is the improvement in graduation rates, where Latinos are now on par with statewide Latinos, and where African American students are very close to the statewide mark for African Americans. Also promising are the results for Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA), where the gap between African American students and their White classmates has narrowed by 7 percentage points.

While this report focuses on the nine-county region, it is clear that success in the Rochester City School District plays an important role in these regional outcomes. ROC the Future is a community collaborative that focuses on strategies to improve outcomes. See reports on a range of indicators impacting Rochester City schools at [RocTheFuture.org](http://RocTheFuture.org).

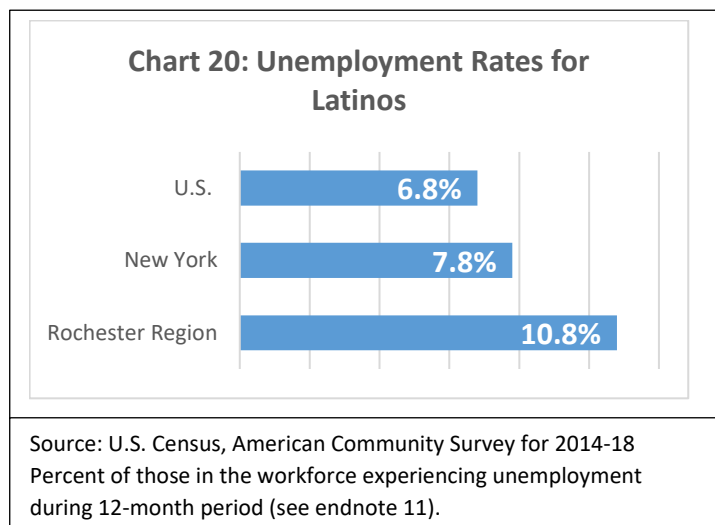
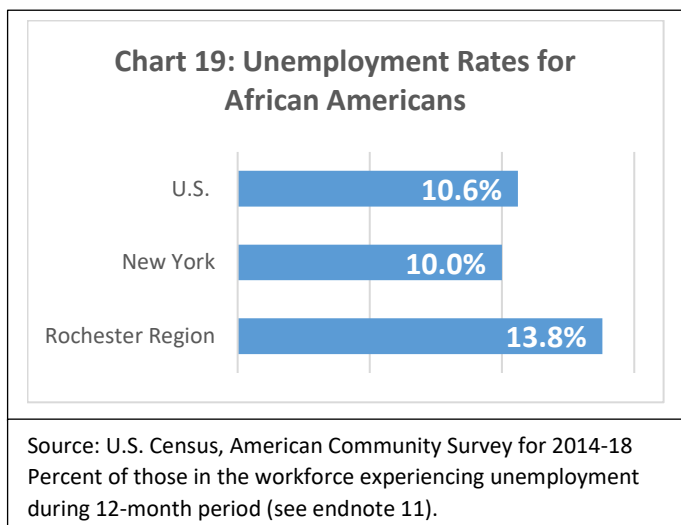
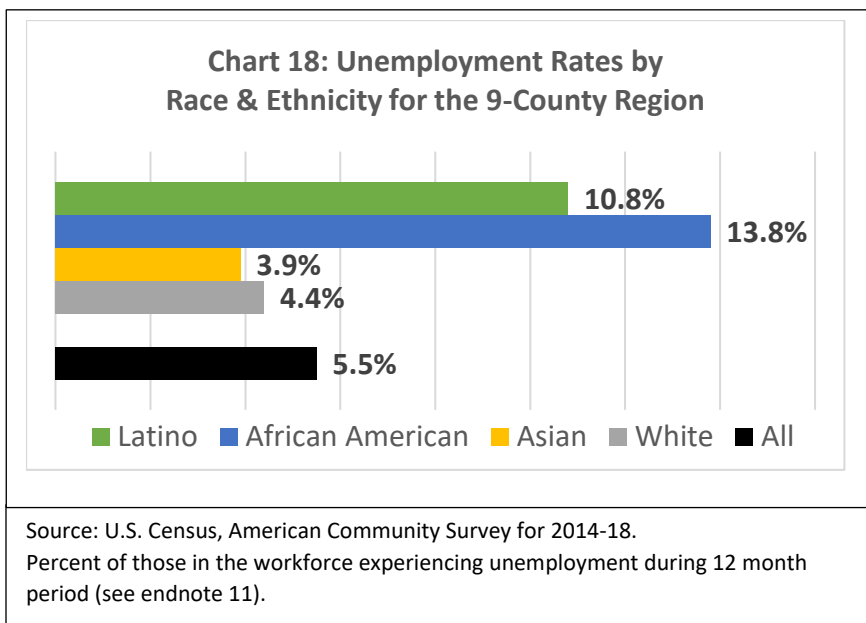
## Section 4: ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

### A. Unemployment<sup>13</sup>

Disparate economic outcomes in our region parallel the gaps seen in earlier life.

African Americans are about 3 times more likely to be unemployed compared with Whites in our region, while the gap for Latinos is about 2 ½ times (Chart 18).

As shown in Charts 19 and 20, unemployment experiences for African Americans and Latinos in our region significantly exceed those of African Americans and Latinos in both the U.S. and NY State.

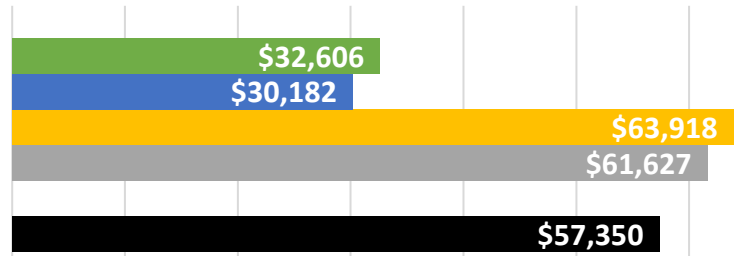


## B. Income

The median income for local African Americans amounts to less than 50% that of Whites. For Latinos, the median income is slightly higher than 50% that of Whites (Chart 21).

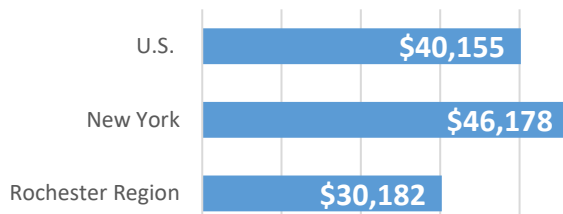
Incomes of local African Americans are equal to only 75% of Blacks nationwide. For Latinos incomes are even lower (66%) when compared with their counterparts nationwide (Charts 22 and 23).

**Chart 21: Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity for the 9-County Region**



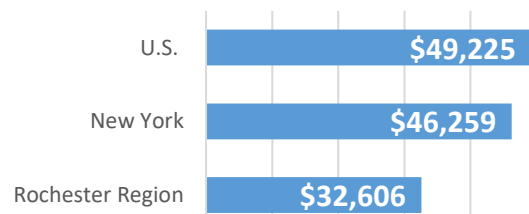
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-18.

**Chart 22: Median Household Income for African Americans**



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-18.

**Chart 23: Median Household Income for Latinos**

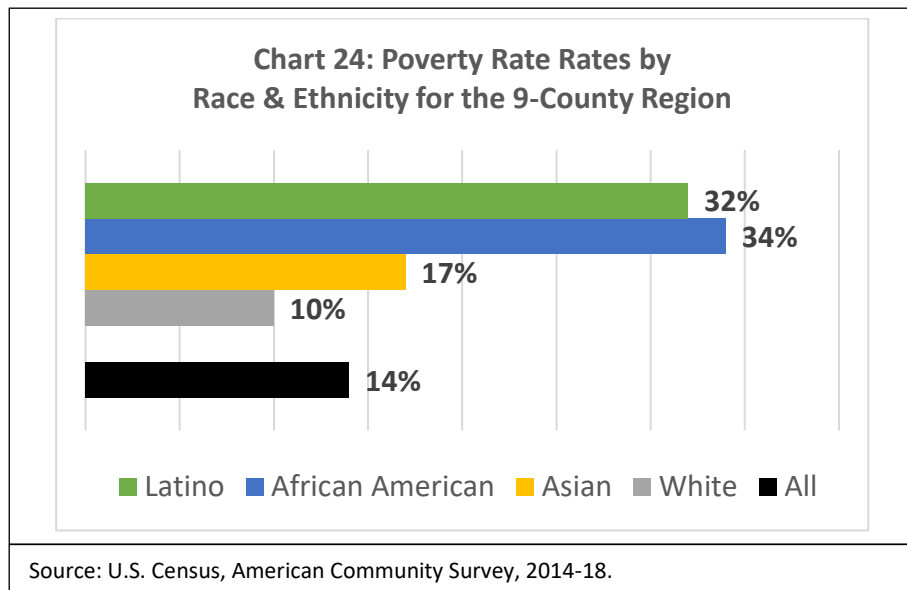


Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-18.



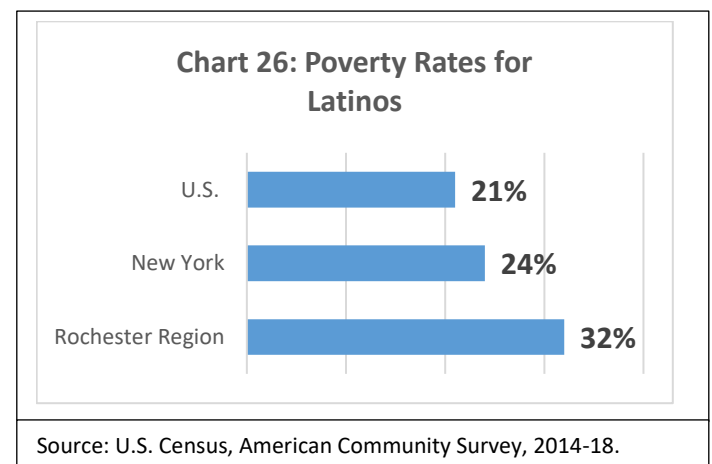
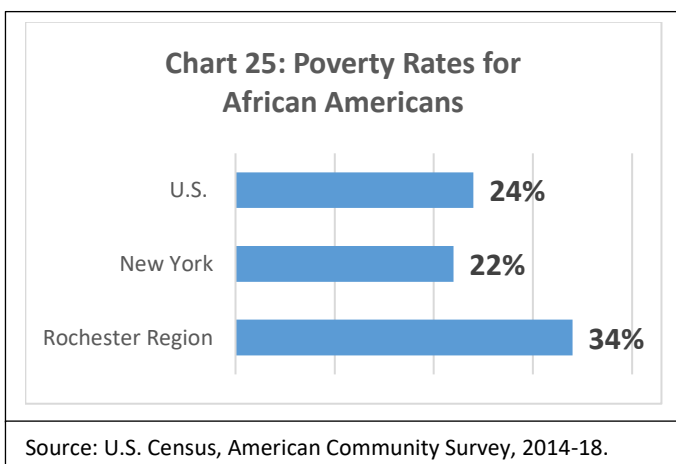
### C. Poverty

Chart 24 shows the dramatic – it would be fair to say extreme – disparity in poverty rates within the nine-county region. Both African Americans and Latinos experience poverty at a rate that is more than 3 times that of Whites. The data here is the percentage of all people in each racial and ethnic group with incomes below the federal poverty line -- well below what is required to meet basic needs<sup>5</sup>.



The poverty rate of African Americans in our region is 42% higher (10 percentage points) than experienced by African Americans in the U.S. It is 55% higher than the NY State mark (Chart 25).

The poverty rate for Latinos in our region is 52% higher than for Latinos in the U.S. and 33% higher than NY State (Chart 26).



## D. Observations and Analysis

Economic disparities within our region and in comparison to the nation and state are extraordinary. These disparities – way out-of-line with the national and statewide experience – reflect a type of racism that must be stopped if our region is to prosper.

Consider a recent Brookings Institution finding regarding income disparity within Monroe County, our region's core county<sup>14</sup>. Of more than 3,100 counties in the nation, Monroe recorded the fifth highest income disparity between Whites and African Americans and Latinos.

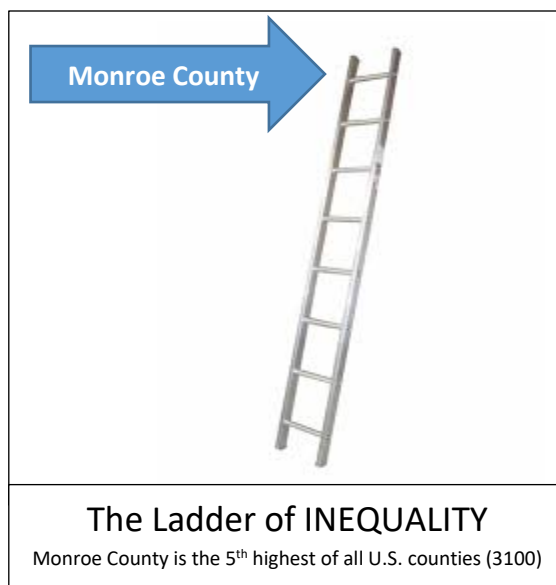
This places Monroe near the pinnacle of inequality. Statistically, this means that 99.840815% of all American counties have a more equitable income distribution when it comes to race.

Compared with the 2017 *Hard Facts* report, this data reflects very minor improvements in economic disparity. This is especially the case in the unemployment rate gap, which shrunk by 2.6 percentage points for African Americans and less than 1 percentage point for Latinos. African American incomes rose very slightly compared with Whites, but Latino incomes declined very slightly compared with Whites. The poverty rate gap between Whites and both African Americans and Latinos declined by 1 percentage point.

Unfortunately, gains by African Americans and Latinos nationwide and statewide outpaced those in our region. While the changes are too small to be considered statistically significant, trends should be watched to see if they continue.

None of the economic indicators above reflect the impact of the COVID-19 virus. It has been widely reported that these impacts have disproportionately hit African Americans and Latinos. Data from the Monroe County Public Health Department shows that through mid-July of 2020, compared with Whites, African Americans experienced 4 times as many COVID-19 cases, nearly 5 times the COVID-19 hospitalization rate, and 2.3 times the COVID-19 death rate. For Latinos, the case rate compared to Whites was 2 ½ times higher, and the hospitalization rate was 3.3 times higher. The Latino COVID-19 death rate was not reported as the data was not considered to be stable given the small number of deaths<sup>15</sup>.

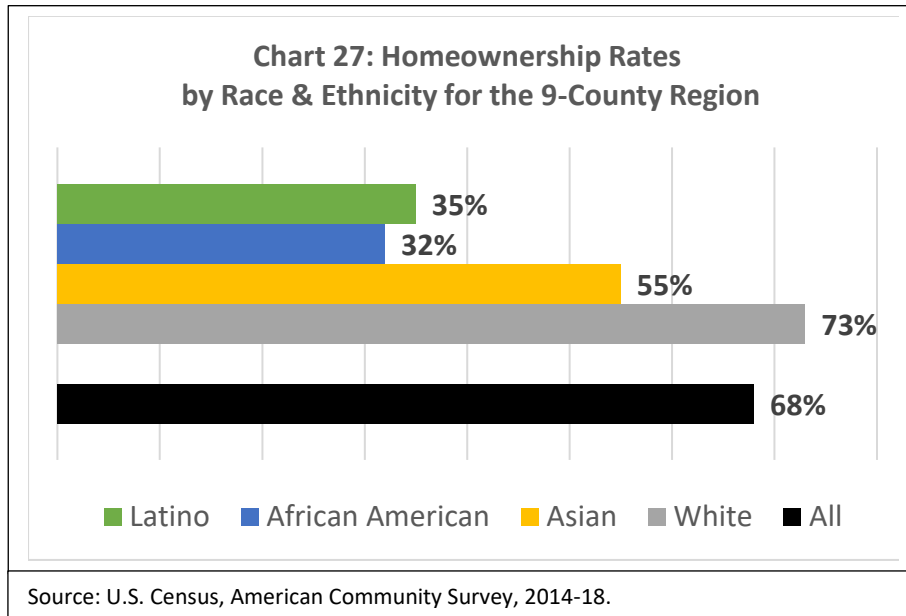
The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will almost certainly be felt more dramatically by People of Color. Current reports already indicate a disproportionate impact on unemployment<sup>16</sup>. The long-term impact of the virus and the recovery should be monitored closely.



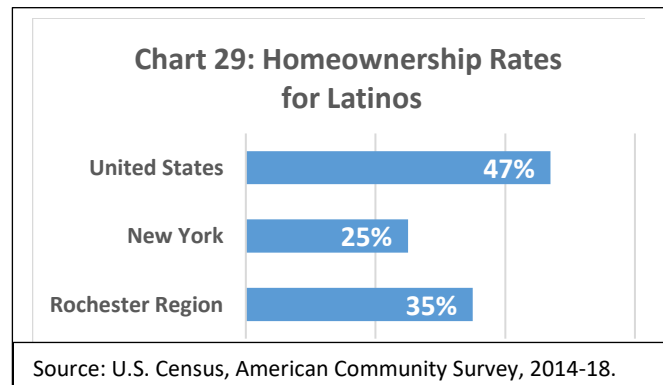
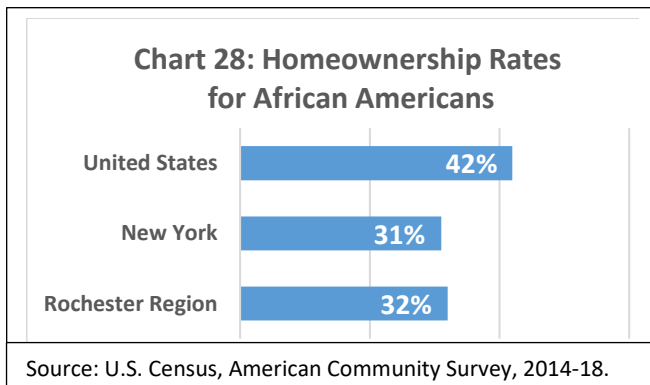
## Section 5: HOUSING AND INTERGENERATIONAL WEALTH

### A. Homeownership

For some, the decision to own or rent a home is a lifestyle choice. But for a large part of our society, it is a matter of economics. So, it is not surprising that disparities in homeownership mirror the income gaps previously described. Both African Americans and Latinos in the nine-county region are less than half as likely as Whites to own the home in which they live (Chart 27).

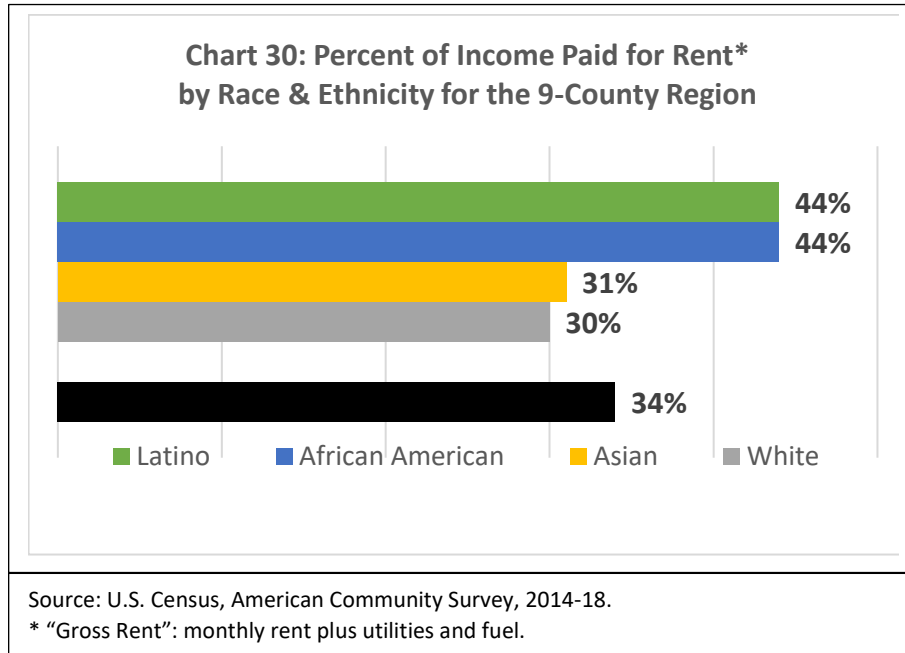


African Americans and Latinos in our region are significantly less likely to own a home, compared with African Americans and Latinos in the U.S. as a whole (Charts 28 and 29). This is particularly concerning since homeownership is considerably less expensive here than elsewhere. Reflecting this relative affordability, more of all regional residents (68%) own homes when compared with the nation (64%). Yet even where our region has a relative advantage over other parts of the nation, that advantage is not realized for African Americans and Latinos.

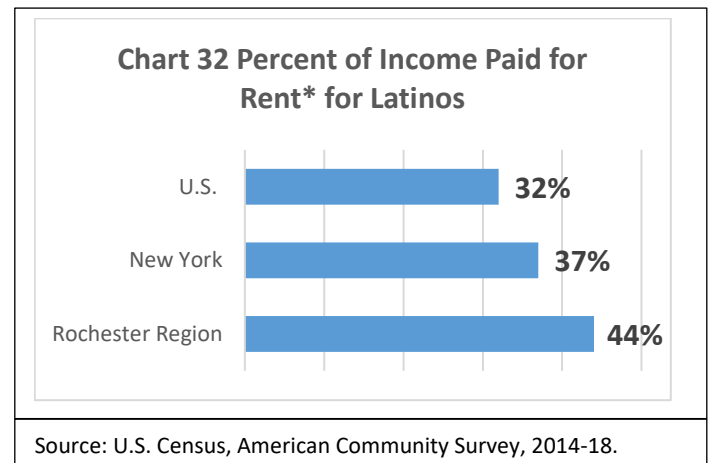
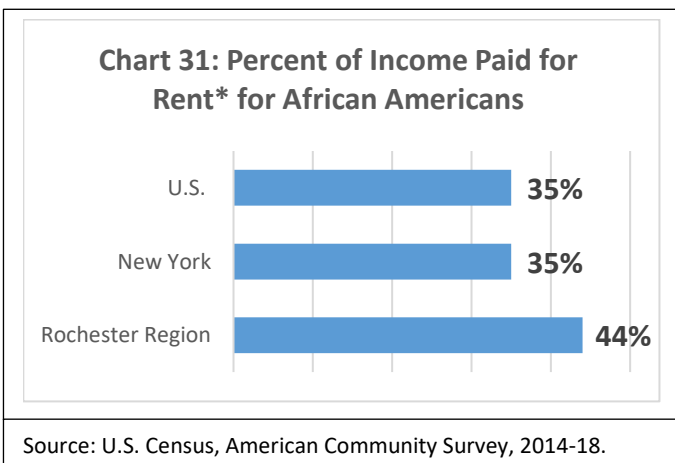


## B. The Cost Burden of Renting

Approximately two-thirds of African Americans and Latinos rent, and they face a greater challenge than Whites in being able to afford their rents. As shown in Chart 30, African Americans and Latinos in our region both pay 44% of their income in rental costs. Only White renters are able to meet the informal benchmark of no-more-than 30% of income for rent. This reality is primarily a reflection of income disparities; we know from other research that there is not a great gap in our region in the amount paid for rents by people of different racial and ethnic groups<sup>17</sup>.

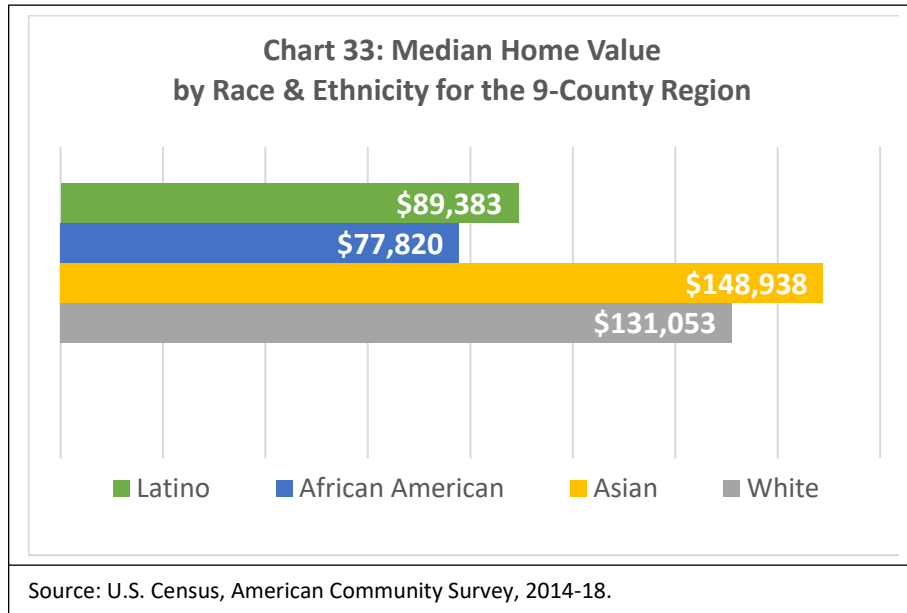


Again, the disparity in the nine-county Rochester region is great enough that both African Americans and Latinos here exceed their national counterparts in the percent of income spent for rent (Charts 31 and 32). Interestingly, the percent of income paid for rent locally exceeds the NY State mark, despite the dramatically higher rental costs in in the New York City area. This suggests that the income disparity is greater than the rental cost differences.

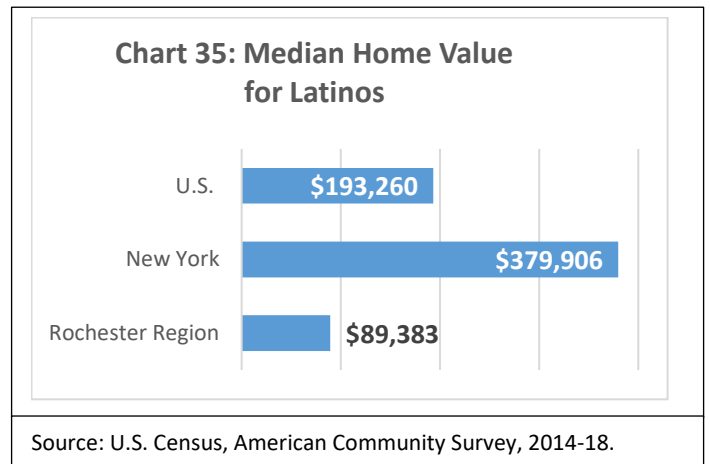
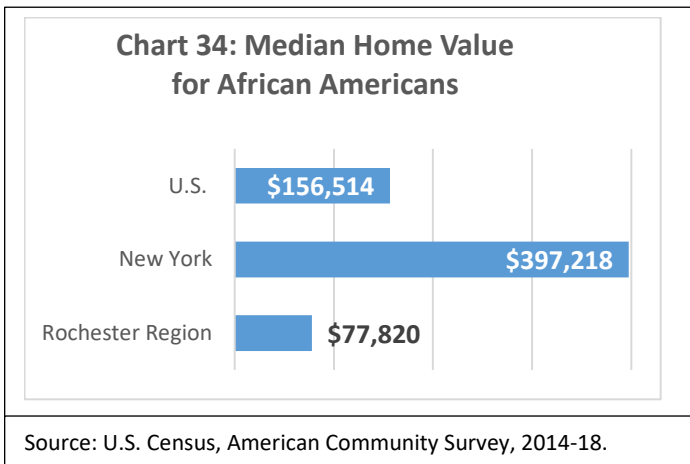


### C. Median Home Value

For African Americans and Latinos who do own homes, the values of their homes are dramatically lower when compared with the value of homes owned by Whites in our region (Chart 33).



For both African Americans and Latinos, the value of homes owned in the nine-county region is dramatically lower (less than half) than the nation as a whole. This is partially the result of our region’s overall lower home costs. For Whites in the region, home values equal about 61% of the nationwide value for Whites.



#### ***D. Observations and Analysis***

The housing data presented above paints a complex picture of the realities faced by African Americans and Latinos in our community. Some quick observations from the data:

- More than two-thirds of African Americans and slightly less than two-thirds of Latinos in our region live in rental homes, compared with about one-quarter of Whites. Homeownership is often seen as the signature of the American Dream. Owning one's home generally represents an important step on the economic ladder. It also can bring a meaningful improvement in quality of life. The equity in one's home is one of the most common means by which families and individuals pass assets to younger generations
- African Americans and Latinos who rent pay 44% of income for rents, considerably higher than Whites (30%), and higher than the 30% ceiling considered economically sustainable. This leaves considerably less income for the other necessities of daily living.
- For African Americans and Latinos who own, home values are less than half that of Whites. This reflects income disparities. But it also is likely to reflect policies and practices that have prevented, discouraged, or intimidated African Americans and Latinos from living in areas of higher value<sup>18</sup>. The average "value deficit" compared to White home values is \$53,233 for African Americans and \$41,670 for Latinos. This "value deficit" contributes to a significant wealth gap, which reduces wealth that is passed along to younger generations.

## Section 6: WHY WE NEED TO ACT

### **A. Real Facts – Real People**

Truly, these are hard facts. They are hard to accept because they undermine sense of community. They are hard facts because they are hard to explain. Without a common understanding of what these facts mean, and how they came to be, it is easy to rationalize explanations that are based on no facts at all.

These are also hard facts in the sense of being solid. This data has been reported for many years by reputable government sources. The data are not perfect (no data really are), but the information is reliable and should not be ignored.

While this data is real, it is important to remember that the percentages represent people. Instead of “infant mortality rate” we should envision the tragedy of an infant death and remember that reality is 3 times as likely for African Americans than Whites in our region. Instead of “childhood poverty rate” we should consider the material and emotional stress on a toddler growing up in an impoverished family, and again remember that both African American and Latino children are more than 3 times as likely to experience this stress. Behind every number in this report are real people struggling to meet the challenges of life, struggles that are made more difficult by staggering and persisting inequalities.

Disparities, gaps, inequalities! These seem to be the key words whenever there is a serious analysis of our region. So often, our study work is headlined as: disparities between Blacks and Whites; gaps between those of means and those without; inequalities between city and suburbs that have persisted for decades. While there may be a tendency to explain away these inequalities as a reflection of society’s ills, the fact that the Rochester region fares more poorly on almost every indicator suggests there is something local that must be fixed. Perhaps it is our extreme concentration of poverty, or our exceptionally segregated communities. Or maybe an entrenched resistance to change.

### **B. Why it Matters**

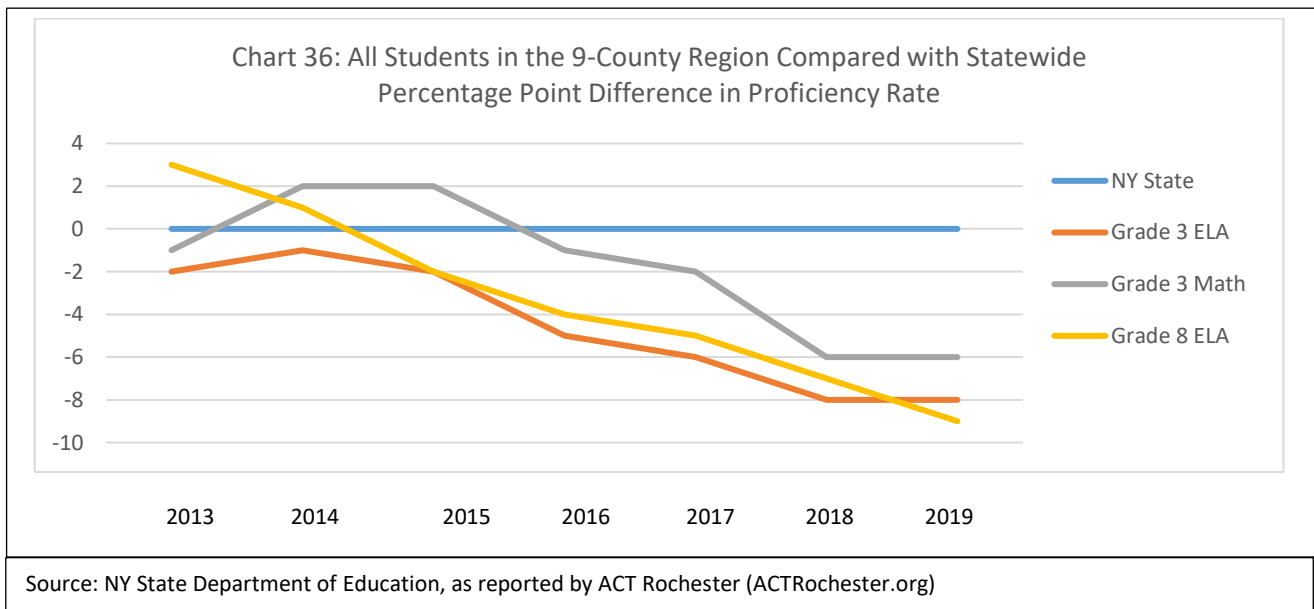
Beyond personal conscience and civic pride, does it matter if we address these issues? After all, we are very segregated. Most people in our regional community do not regularly see the people behind these numbers. Of course, it matters for reasons of conscience and pride. But it also matters for the economic well-being of our region.

Consider our poverty rates. African Americans and Latinos in our nine-county region experience poverty at a rate considerably higher than their counterparts in the nation (Charts 25 and 26). We do not know the reason for this, so we should assume our region can achieve those national levels. As described in the table below, regional poverty rates at the national level for People of Color would result in our region having about 21,800 fewer people in poverty – which works out to about half the population of the town of Webster. In addition to higher dignity for 21,800 people, we would have significantly reduced public support costs, and greater local tax revenues. This simply makes sense – if more people share in the resources of the region, we all benefit.



Reduction in Poor Population if National Poverty Rates were Achieved Here						
Group	Current Nine-County Population (Appendix A)	Current Poverty Rate (Charts 25 & 26)	People in Poverty (rounded)	National Poverty Rate (Charts 25 & 26)	People in Poverty at the National Rate (rounded)	Difference
African Americans	128,359	34%	43,600	24%	30,800	<b>12,800</b>
Latino	81,627	32%	26,100	21%	17,100	<b>9,000</b>
<b>Total</b>						<b>21,800</b>

In another example of how racial and ethnic disparities impact the entire region, we should consider how educational testing scores in our region are becoming less competitive with other parts of NY State. The 2017 *Hard Facts* report noted a gradual decline in regional scores for all students between 2000 and 2016<sup>19</sup>. That decline has continued to the point that the nine-county region constantly lags statewide results – for all students. Chart 36 below compares our region’s results to statewide results for the same tests in the same year.



The implications of this table are enormous. Our region, historically a statewide leader, is being consistently outperformed. And, the pattern has been getting consistently worse, especially in the most recent five years. Some, of course, will think of this as a “city problem” in light of the Rochester City School District’s academic struggles. But consider this: In 2019, not one of the 9 counties achieved the statewide mark for Grade 3 English; only one county (Wyoming) exceeded the state level for Grade 3 Math; and only one county (Ontario) exceeded the state result for Grade 8 English.

Remember, this table is for all students. We do not know the degree to which these results stem from lower scores by our region’s students of color. But the disparities between those students and their statewide counterparts are very significant (Charts 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, and 14), meaning that the disparities contribute meaningfully to our region’s underperformance. Why do students of color struggle in our region?

These are just two examples of how failing to provide equitably hurts the entire region. There are many other examples. While a basic sense of justice compels us to act on the inequalities described here, we should also see that greater justice will bring greater community progress.

## Section 7: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This report has illustrated many of our region's most persistent disparities. However, we recognize that behind every disparity lies an opportunity. It is not the intention of this report to stigmatize People of Color or to view them as "problems," but instead to point out how past decisions meted out on racist terms have created a set of conditions that undermine opportunity in our communities of color. Yet there are tremendous opportunities to revitalize our region and realize Rochester's promise by recognizing the inherent value and agency in every person and community. Each child lost to infant mortality or afflicted with childhood poverty could, but for structural racism and its attendant disparities, contribute to Rochester's vitality. As we recognize the disparities, we must also remain cognizant of the strengths and rich assets that our communities of color possess. Even in accounting for the disparities, we would do well to remember that these assets must also be recognized and built upon.

So, what response should we have to these disparities and opportunities – as individuals and as a community? Many times, discussions around racial equity start and stop at the individual response. However, we have already observed how a communitywide lens is necessary to understand and make progress in closing these disparities and realizing opportunities. Indeed there are already communitywide structured initiatives to improve education (ROC the Future) and reduce poverty (Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative), two areas where racial and ethnic disparities are significant. In addition, there are many other organizations fostering equity in our community. In June 2020, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren and Monroe County Executive Adam Bello announced the formation of a **Commission on Racial and Structural Equity** "to examine and develop policies and legislation to overcome systemic and institutional inequities, as well as racism in Rochester and Monroe County<sup>20</sup>." In August 2020, the 21-member commission was named.

These efforts are heavily dependent on broad support from all sectors of our community, including businesses and other employers, governments throughout the county, educators throughout the county, community organizations, and the public at large.

Nibbling at the edges while preserving the current economic paradigm will only exacerbate our challenges as we lose ground to other regions that are taking bold steps to address poverty and structural racism. Our community needs to embrace innovation and look for big ideas. Consider asking ourselves: What if?

1. What if we realized that the majority of jobs and opportunities are held by suburban and White people, and that has an effect on People of Color, particularly in the City of Rochester. Even municipal jobs and those in nonprofits that *service* the city population are held by people who live outside the city. Can we really anticipate major change if we are unwilling to tackle this bedrock fact? Is it time for us to consider investment in communities of color as a response to the economic reality of resource flow from the city? What could that look like?

What if we talked about residency requirements or commuter taxes as ways to capture revenue that can be reinvested into the city? Funds that are collected in this manner could be used explicitly for anti-racist purposes to create more economic mobility and growth for People of Color in the city.

2. What if our history leads us on a trail to possible solutions? We know that the natural economic growth that was occurring for African Americans in the Clarissa Street section of the city was

stopped with urban renewal after the 1964 uprising. History tells us that policies like redlining and restrictive covenants were created with explicit racial intent<sup>21</sup>.

Many current policy responses tend to be race neutral, ignoring the explicitly non-neutral nature of past policies. These types of policies do not redress past injustice and continue to repeat inequalities. Do our policies and responses need to be explicitly anti-racist in form and function?

3. What if our approach to issues of poverty and race has been too individually focused? Thinking of poverty as an individual phenomenon limits the imagination and forces us into unworkable solutions that are not up to the scale of the problem. Approaches to create *self-sufficiency* or reach certain income thresholds for individuals may need to be amended to consider the creation and supplementation of healthy interdependent networks that require us to think differently about how communities are resourced.

Let us suggest some specific goals for communitywide collective action:

1. Conduct **communitywide conversations about race, racism, and inequality**. Such conversations should be well-planned, held throughout the region, and aimed at providing education regarding the explicit historical origins of current inequalities.
2. Develop goals and a plan to reduce our region's exceptional **concentration of poverty**<sup>22</sup>, specifically in the City of Rochester. There are three broad strategies to achieve this: reduce poverty, attract more people of means into the city, and expand housing opportunities outside of the city for people in poverty. Each of these strategies is fraught with significant issues of racial justice, and each carry challenges that could result in failure. But unless well-planned actions in all three strategies are implemented, we will not succeed.

There is a growing body of research that describes poverty more comprehensively. The *Area Deprivation Index* and *Social Deprivation Index* are peer-reviewed approaches to measure poverty and its resulting implications within a given geography<sup>23</sup>. This is critical because these types of measures force us to think beyond poverty as an individual phenomenon and consider the geospatial organization of poverty and its implications for whole communities within our region.

Poverty, especially racialized poverty in this region, has to be viewed through this lens to fully appreciate why it is so stubborn to engage. For example, a young person living in the northeast section of the City of Rochester known as the *Crescent*, a notably impoverished section of our community, is not just dealing with a lack of money but also reduced social capital to access opportunities including educational resources, mentors and employment opportunities. Structural racism makes it more likely that this is a young person of color and subject to many of the disparities described throughout this report. Simply getting this young person across the poverty threshold is not only improbable given the communitywide deprivation, but insufficient to create a thriving healthy community in which this child can grow and contribute.

3. Take immediate actions to lessen the **concentration of student poverty**. The process described above will take decades to achieve – our children cannot wait! Our region's concentration of poverty is even greater for children. The City of Rochester is home to 70% of Monroe County's poor children and 49% of the poor children in the nine-county region. The resulting concentration of student

poverty within the Rochester City School District is staggering and presents the District with educational challenges not even imagined in our suburban schools. There are certainly some strategies available, like the efforts of *Great Schools for All* to establish cross-district magnet schools and to provide learning based on successful practices in other regions<sup>24</sup>. It will require region-wide leadership and cooperation to bring these and other strategies into action.

4. Work to reverse the **de-concentration of employment**. For several decades, the City of Rochester was able to hold onto its employment base even as the population declined. But with the loss of manufacturing, with its anchoring brick and mortar plants, jobs have left the city.

Earlier in this report we explored median household incomes by race, but it cannot be overlooked that total income in City of Rochester is approximately \$4.3 billion while the Rochester region's total income is \$34 billion. While the city is home to 17% of the region's population, it only accounts for 12.6% of the region's gross income.<sup>25</sup>

What makes this disparity even more pernicious is the manner in which it is reinforced by the distribution of our workforce, in both the private and public sectors. Private sector employment frequently follows lower-cost land development options, often on the physical fringes of our area. Service sector jobs follow the more affluent population base. Economic development incentives have largely failed to bring jobs closer to the urban core.

Even in the public sector, employment may be in the city, but income does not stay there. Take for example the Rochester City School District (RCSD), where its staff is overwhelmingly white and resides outside of the City of Rochester. The adopted 2020-2021 RCSD budget shows an actual 2018-2019 expense of \$560,759,846 in salary, benefits, and compensation. Considering that over 70% of district staff reside outside of the City of Rochester, the implication is that approximately \$400 million is flowing from the city to its surrounding suburbs. This same pattern is true across the uniformed municipal services (fire, police), capital construction (even when funded by the city), and many nonprofits. Suburbanites travel to the city to earn an income that is largely expended in the suburbs.

Use of residency requirements and more targeted economic development incentives are tools to consider here.

5. Plan to **reduce residential segregation**. We have discussed the historical patterns of racial segregation. These patterns continue today. A 2012 study found that segregation in our area recorded the Rochester metro area as having the 5<sup>th</sup> highest degree of segregation among cities of Rochester's size<sup>26</sup>. Rochester's rating placed it 31% higher than the mid-point of comparably sized cities. This degree of segregation means that most in our area will have very little contact with people of other races.

Reducing this segregation will take decades, but the value of desegregating at all levels of the income scale are undeniable.

On an individual level, people are likely to have many reactions to the data in this report: disbelief, confusion, anger; or maybe guilt. Of course, some will blame individuals for the fate of their group. While

individuals can, and do, behave in ways that contribute to their condition, to attribute that reality to an entire race or group of people is a racist idea. And it is an idea without any evidence.

Ibram Kendi posits the idea that a person can be a racist or an antiracist; that there is not a neutral middle ground of being “not racist.” Kendi’s definition of an antiracist is “one who is supporting antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea<sup>27</sup>.” So, if one accepts Kendi’s definitions, actions, or at least expressions of action, are required to avoid being racist.

So, what are actions that an individual can take? Here are a few:

- **Learn:** If you have read this report, your learning has begun. But there is so much more that we can learn – about disparities in other areas, such as adult health care and criminal justice. Or we can delve more deeply into the data presented here to understand how such inequalities came to be. To encourage further study, this report includes a learning kit (Appendix E) to help groups of various sizes move from awareness to a deeper understanding of the inequalities in our community.
- **Engage:** There are many ways to engage with others in our neighborhoods, churches, schools, places of work, clubs, and other social networks. Encouraging others in learning is a good way to engage. Engagement can also take place in one-on-one settings, such as using a data point in this report to start a conversation, or to counter unfounded statements that we sometimes hear. Another way to engage is to volunteer time and resources to organizations working to eliminate or alleviate the impacts of inequality.
- **Advocate:** Through political action or by joining in community movements, there are many ways to raise a voice against inequality.
- **Ask the hard questions.** This report makes it clear that conditions of inequality are greater in the Rochester region than elsewhere. While people are often generous with their time and money, we seldom hear calls for the kind of community change that is needed. We are outraged when there is racist graffiti in our neighborhood, but do we also advocate for inclusive zoning regulations in our town? Do we encourage affordable housing in our town?

We appreciate the time you took to read *Hard Facts 2020* and to consider its implications for our region. As you share this report, we encourage you to consider our suggestions for change and to think of other ways to make Rochester and the region more equitable for all. We suggest you share your ideas with your local representatives and community collaboratives referenced in this report.

## **ENDNOTES:**

1. Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester, *Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area*, December 13, 2013.
2. The nine-county region consists of Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Livingston, Genesee, Wyoming, and Orleans. These counties form the coverage area for ACT Rochester, as well as for other regional programs, such as the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council.
3. The majority of indicators in this report are from the U.S Census Bureau's American Community Survey for 2014-18. This is the most recent data at the time of this report. The American Community Survey is a scientific series of ongoing surveys with the results published annually for a single year, or for a five-year weighted average. The five-year average is used here because it has the lowest margin of error. Data in the Educational Testing Outcomes section are from the NY State Department of Education for the 2019 school year. Two indicators: Low Birth Weight (Chart 1) and Infant Mortality Rate (Chart 2) are from the Monroe County Department of Public Health for 2017. These two indicators are for Monroe County only. All other indicators are for the nine-county Rochester region. All data used in Charts 1-36 is available on the ACT Rochester website (see #5 below).
4. Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York: Random House, 2019
5. American Anthropological Association, *Race: Are We So Different?*  
(<http://www.understandingrace.org/>)
6. ACT Rochester is a community indicators Initiative of Rochester Area Community Foundation. ACT Rochester's purpose "is to change the culture of community problem-solving and associated decision making through the use of credible, independent and timely data." The website ([ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org)) tracks more than 100 indicators in nine program categories, as well as data for major community initiatives dealing with race and ethnicity, poverty, and education. Among the resources on the website is ACT Rochester's annual Community Report Card.
7. The federal poverty level income for 2020 is \$12,760, plus an additional \$4,480 for each additional family member. It is widely recognized that this level is well below what is needed to meet basic needs. For a detailed comparison and discussion of the difference between the poverty level and financial self-sufficiency, see: *Poverty and Self-Sufficiency in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area*, ACT Rochester and Rochester Area Community Foundation, September 2016.  
([ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org))
8. Common Ground, "Racism is a Public Health Crisis" [CommonGroundHealth.org](http://CommonGroundHealth.org)
9. Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, Clemens Noelke, Nancy McArdle, "The Geography of Child Opportunity: Why Neighborhoods Matter for Equity" Diversity Data Kids, Child Opportunity Index 2.0  
[http://www.diversitydatakids.org/sites/default/files/file/ddk\\_the-geography-of-child-opportunity\\_2020v2\\_0.pdf](http://www.diversitydatakids.org/sites/default/files/file/ddk_the-geography-of-child-opportunity_2020v2_0.pdf)



10. The Rochester metro is the Census Bureau’s Rochester Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). It consists of six of the nine counties in the region: Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Orleans, Wayne, and Yates.
11. “The Geography of Child Opportunity,” p. 25.  
[http://www.diversitydatakids.org/sites/default/files/file/ddk\\_the-geography-of-child-opportunity\\_2020v2\\_0.pdf](http://www.diversitydatakids.org/sites/default/files/file/ddk_the-geography-of-child-opportunity_2020v2_0.pdf)
12. The term “academic achievement” begs the question: whose achievement – the student, the schools, or the community? It certainly should not be viewed as a measure of achievement by the children, but often is.
13. The unemployment rate used here is from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for 2014-18. On the survey, individuals who identify themselves as being in the workforce are asked if they experienced unemployment during the past 12 months. It is different from the point-in-time rate (from the Bureau of Labor Statistics) that is popularly used. The rate used here has certain advantages: it shows an individual’s experience over the course of 12 full months (that is why it is higher than the point-in-time rate); and it is available by race and ethnicity. However, this is a lagging indicator and is less accurate at gauging the current status.
14. Brookings Institution, Metropolitan Policy Program. As reported in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, May 19, 2019.
15. Monroe County Department of Public Health, Monroe County COVID-19 Preliminary data as of July 2015  
<https://www2.monroecounty.gov/files/health/coronavirus/2020-07-15-COVID19%20Surveillance.pdf>
16. Ernie Tedeschi and Quoctung Bui, “Unemployment Tracker: Job Losses for Black Workers are Deepening,” New York Times, June 16, 2020.
17. ACT Rochester, *Hard Facts*, August 2017, p. 18 (Chart 24).
18. For a detailed description of how government caused or allowed overt housing segregation, see Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation. For a Rochester perspective, see Justin Murphy, Closed Doors, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, February 9, 2020.
19. Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester, “Hard Facts,” 2017, p.18, note # 5.
20. <https://www.monroecounty.gov/news-2020-06-18-commission>
21. “Confronting Racial Covenants: How they Segregated Monroe County and What to Do About Them,” City Roots Community Land Trust and Environmental Protection Clinic at Yale University, July 2020.

22. Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester, "Poverty and the Concentration of Poverty in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area," December 2013.
23. University of Wisconsin, Department of Medicine, About the Neighborhood Atlas <https://www.neighborhoodatlas.medicine.wisc.edu>; and Robert Graham Center, Social Deprivation Index [www.graham-center.org/rgc/maps-data-tools/sdi/social-deprivation-index.html](http://www.graham-center.org/rgc/maps-data-tools/sdi/social-deprivation-index.html)
24. Great Schools for All (GS4A) <http://gs4a.org/>
25. U.S. Census - American Community Survey for 2014-18.
26. Edward Glaeser and Jacob Vigdor "The End of the Segregated Century," Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Jan., 2012.
27. Kendi, p. 13.

Nine-County Region - Population by Race and Ethnicity						
County →	Monroe		Livingston		Genesee	
Race/Ethnic Group	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	566,271	76.1%	59,696	93.4%	53,404	91.9%
African American	113,538	15.3%	1,805	2.8%	1,304	2.2%
American Indian <sup>1</sup>	3,378	0.4%	128	0.2%	510	0.9%
Asian	26,661	3.6%	833	1.3%	477	0.8%
Native Hawaiian <sup>2</sup>	120	*	22	*	0	0.0%
Some Other Race	12,226	1.6%	429	0.7%	997	1.7%
2 or More Races	22,054	3.0%	994	1.6%	1,420	2.5%
Total – All Races	744,248	100.0%	63,907	100.0%	58,112	100.0%
Latino <sup>3</sup>	63,631	8.5%	2,223	3.5%	1,849	3.2%

County →	Orleans		Wyoming		Wayne	
Race/Ethnic Group	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	36,583	88.8%	37,162	91.6%	84,701	93.2%
African American	2,541	6.2%	1,837	4.5%	2,631	2.9%
American Indian <sup>1</sup>	151	0.4%	228	0.6%	144	0.1%
Asian	326	0.8%	155	0.4%	606	0.7%
Native Hawaiian <sup>2</sup>	21	0.1%	0	0.0%	78	0.1%
Some Other Race	802	1.9%	454	1.1%	786	0.9%
2 or More Races	751	1.8%	729	1.8%	1,910	2.1%
Total – All Races	41,175	100.0%	40,565	100.0%	90,856	100.0%
Latino <sup>3</sup>	1,961	4.8%	1,320	3.3%	3,878	4.3%

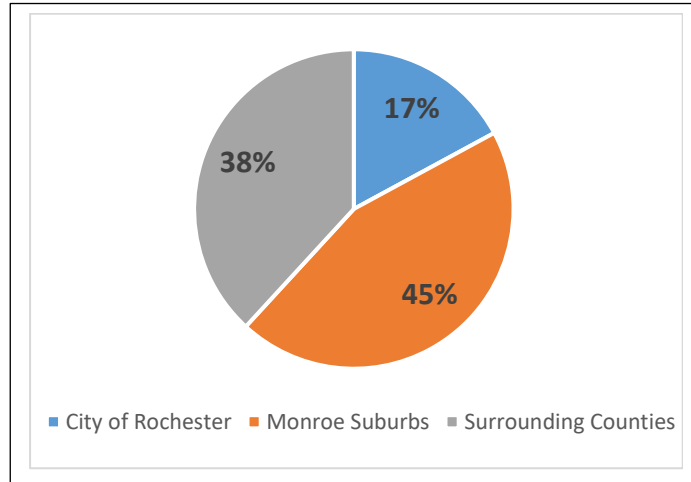
County →	Ontario		Seneca		Yates		Nine-County Total	
Race/Ethnic Group	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	101,467	92.7%	31,669	91.5%	24,061	96.2%	995,014	82.4%
African American	2,770	2.5%	1,707	4.9%	226	0.9%	128,359	10.6%
American Indian <sup>1</sup>	487	0.5%	135	0.4%	53	0.2%	5,214	0.4%
Asian	1,455	1.3%	242	0.7%	189	0.8%	30,944	2.6%
Native Hawaiian <sup>2</sup>	37	*	0	0.0%	7	*	285	*
Some Other Race	1,480	1.4%	234	0.7%	164	0.7%	17,572	1.5%
2 or More Races	1,776	1.6%	625	1.8%	309	1.2%	30,568	2.5%
Total – All Races	109,472	100.0%	34,612	100.0%	25,009	100.0%	1,207,956	100.0%
Latino <sup>3</sup>	5,058	4.6%	1,158	3.3%	549	2.2%	81,627	6.8%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey for 2014-18

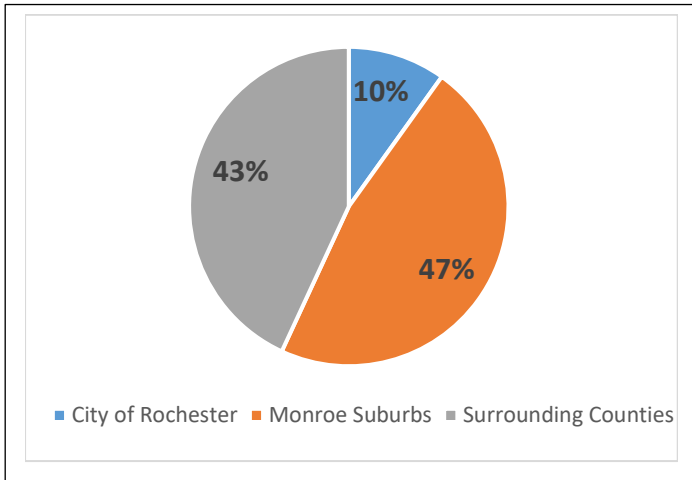
1. American Indian and Alaska Native; 2. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander; Latinos of any race; \* = less than .05 percent.

### WHERE WE LIVE

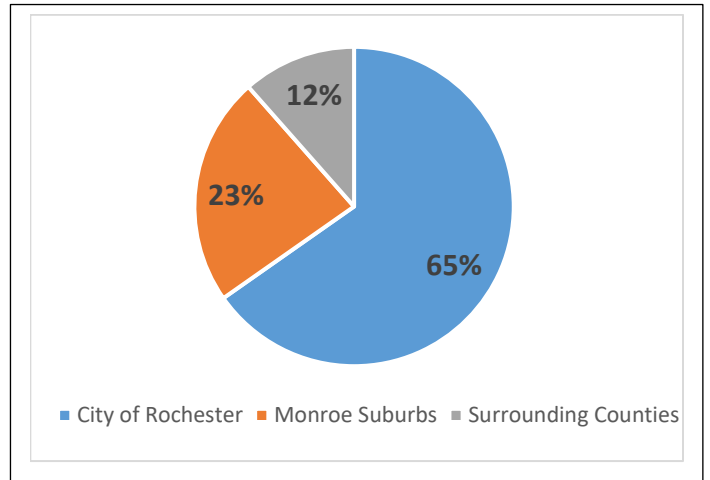
#### Total Population



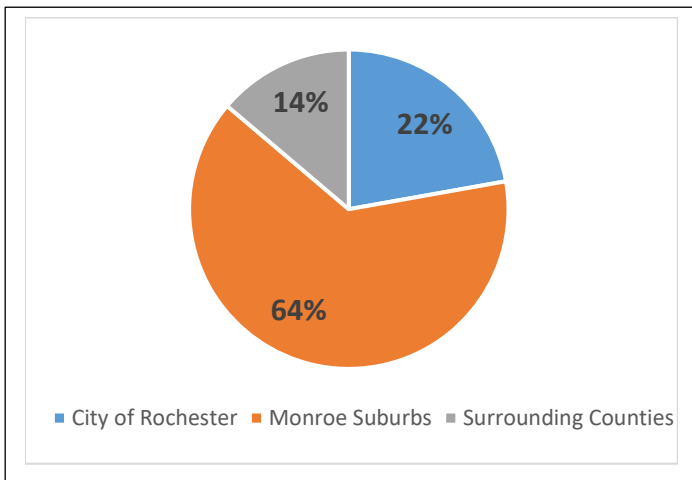
#### White Population



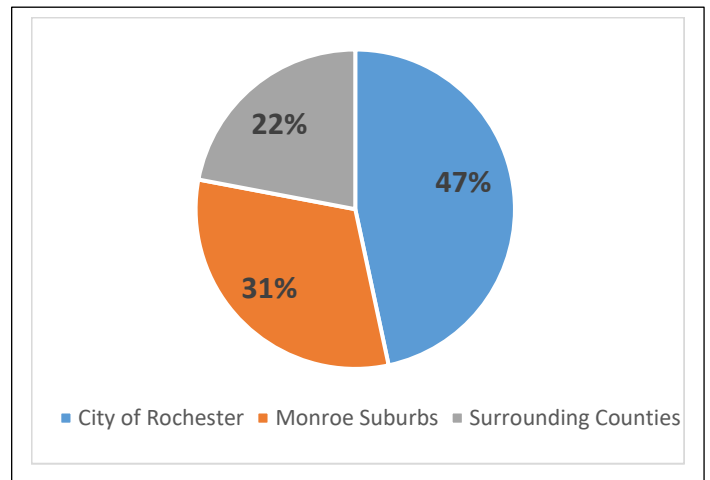
#### African American Population



#### Asian Population



#### Latino Population



**Changes in the Racial and Ethnic Divide: 2017 *Hard Facts* Report and this 2020 *Hard Facts* Update  
Disparities Within the Nine-County Rochester Region**

Indicator	Gaps for African Americans				Gaps for Latinos		
	Gap 2017 Report	Gap 2020 Update	Change In Gap		Gap 2017 Report	Gap 2020 Update	Change In Gap
Low Birth Weight	2.3 times	2.5 times	+		1.5 times	2 times	+
Infant Mortality	2.8 times	3 times	+		1.2 times	2 times	+
Child Poverty	4.2 times	3.8 times	-		3.5 times	3.1 times	-
Grade 3 English	28%	48%	--		40%	52%	--
Grade 3 Math	NA	49%	NA		NA	54%	NA
Grade 8 English	28%	35%	--		32%	42%	--
Graduation Rate	73%	79%	--		74%	82%	--
Unemployment Rate	3 times	3 times	<b>unch.</b>		2.2 times	2.5 times	+
Median Income	48%	49%	-		53%	53%	<b>unch.</b>
Poverty Rate	3.3 times	3.4 times	+		3.1 times	3.2 times	+
Homeownership	45%	44%	+		48%	48%	<b>unch.</b>
% of Income for Rent	1.6 times	1.5 times	-		1.3 times	1.5 times	+
Home Values	NA	59%	NA		NA	68%	NA

Gaps are the difference in outcomes for African Americans and Whites or for Latinos and Whites. For deficit indicators (poverty, unemployment, etc.), gaps are expressed as the number of times the White outcome would be multiplied to equal the African American or Latino rate. For example, in 2020, the Infant Mortality Rate for African Americans is 3 times that of Whites. For asset indicators, the gap is expressed as a percent of the White outcome. Change in Gap: + means gap increased; - means gap decreased; -- means gap decreased significantly; unch. signifies that the gap is unchanged; NA = not available.

## Changes in the Racial and Ethnic Disparities: 2017 *Hard Facts* Report and 2020 *Hard Facts* Update

### Gaps for African Americans and Latinos in the Nine-County Rochester Region, Compared with African Americans and Latinos in the Nation or New York State

Indicator	Gaps for Regional <b>African Americans</b> Compared with the Nation or New York State (All comparisons are with African Americans in the U.S. as a whole, except education outcomes, which are compared with NY State as a whole)				Gaps for Regional <b>Latinos</b> Compared with the Nation or New York State (All comparisons are with Latinos in the U.S. as a whole, except education outcomes, which are compared with NY State as a whole)		
	Gap 2017 Report	Gap 2020 Update	Change In Gap		Gap 2017 Report	Gap 2020 Update	Change In Gap
Child Poverty	1.3 times	1.4 times	+		1.3 times	1.4 times	+
Grade 3 English	42%	56%	- -		63%	63%	unch.
Grade 3 Math	NA	65%	NA		NA	72%	NA
Grade 8 English	46%	46%	unch.		50%	51%	-
Graduation Rate	93%	96%	- -		94%	100%	- -
Unemployment Rate	1.2 times	1.3 times	+		1.3 times	1.6 times	+
Median Income	76%	75%	+		70 %	66%	+
Poverty Rate	1.3 times	1.4 times	+		1.4 times	1.5 times	+
Homeownership	79%	76%	+		76%	74%	+
% of Income for Rent	NA	1.3 times	NA		NA	1.4 times	NA
Home Values	NA	50%	NA		NA	46%	NA

Gaps are the difference in outcomes for African Americans or Latinos in the Nine-County Rochester region and African Americans or Latinos nationwide, except for the education. Education outcomes compare African Americans or Latinos to their counterparts in NY State. For deficit indicators (poverty, unemployment, etc.), gaps are expressed as the number of times the national (or NY State) outcome would be multiplied to equal the rate for the Nine-County Rochester region. Change in Gap: + means gap increased; - means gap decreased; - - means gap decreased significantly; unch. signifies that the gap is unchanged; NA = not available.

## Ideas and Resources to Expand Learning

Having read this report, you know that racial and ethnic inequalities shape the lives – from birth onward – of African Americans and Latinos. The magnitude of the disparities may be shocking and leave you asking, what can one person do to bring about change? We encourage you to discuss this report with your circle – with family, friends, religious groups, classmates, and co-workers – to more deeply understand how Rochester and many of its residents came to be in this situation.

This kit is intended to foster such learning. It is organized around three potential levels of learning, though of course, there are infinite levels of learning possible. The tips provided here are intended to help and encourage learning, but they are guidelines not firm rules.

## Level 1: Expanding Awareness

Goal: To share the awareness gained from this report with a group of co-workers, a religious congregation, a high school or college class, a civic club, neighborhood organization, or any other group.

Resources: The report and a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the report may be downloaded from: [ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org)

Size of Group: Any size

Approach: Using the PowerPoint presentation, the leader summarizes the report information (about 30 to 45 minutes) and then encourages a group discussion (15 to 45 minutes). [Note: the PowerPoint presentation includes probing questions to foster this discussion]

Requirements:

- a. A leader/presenter who has read the report and is comfortable in leading a group learning;
- b. A room large enough for the group, or a virtual meeting software (such as ZOOM);
- c. A laptop computer and a PowerPoint projector (if these are not available, paper copies of the presentation can be used);
- d. Time needed: 1 to 1 ½ hours is ideal; 45 minutes is minimum.



## Level 2: Expanded Awareness, plus a Deeper Dive

**Goal:** The same as level one with the addition of small group discussion to delve more deeply into one (or more) of the broad topic areas of the report: Child Health and Well-being; Education; Economic Well-being; Housing.

**Resources:** The report and a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the report may be downloaded from: [ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org)

**Size of Group:** Enough for small breakout groups and discussion (10 or 12 minimum; no maximum).

**Approach:** The same as level one, except that the general discussion after the presentation should be kept brief (about 10 minutes). Then the group should select a topic area by consensus (or this could be done in advance) and break into groups of 4 to 6. Each group would have the same task, to explore the root causes of the local disparities documented in the report. A group facilitator should be selected (by the group or in advance) to keep the discussion on-topic and to record the key points of discussion. After a 15-minute small group discussion, participants should reconvene, and the group facilitators report on the key points. If the group wishes to, the key points can be recorded for future discussion.

### Requirements:

- a. A leader/presenter who has read the report and is comfortable in leading a group learning;
- b. Facilitators for each small group of about 4 to 6 people;
- c. A room large enough for the group, or a virtual meeting software (such as ZOOM);
- d. Space for small group discussion, or if using virtual software, the leader should be facile in the use of the break-out group functions;
- e. A laptop computer and a PowerPoint projector (if these are not available, paper copies of the presentation can be used);
- f. Flip charts and markers to record small group discussion (unless using virtual meeting software);
- g. Time needed: About 1 ½ hours to 2 hours is ideal.

### Level 3: Fostering an Antiracist Rochester

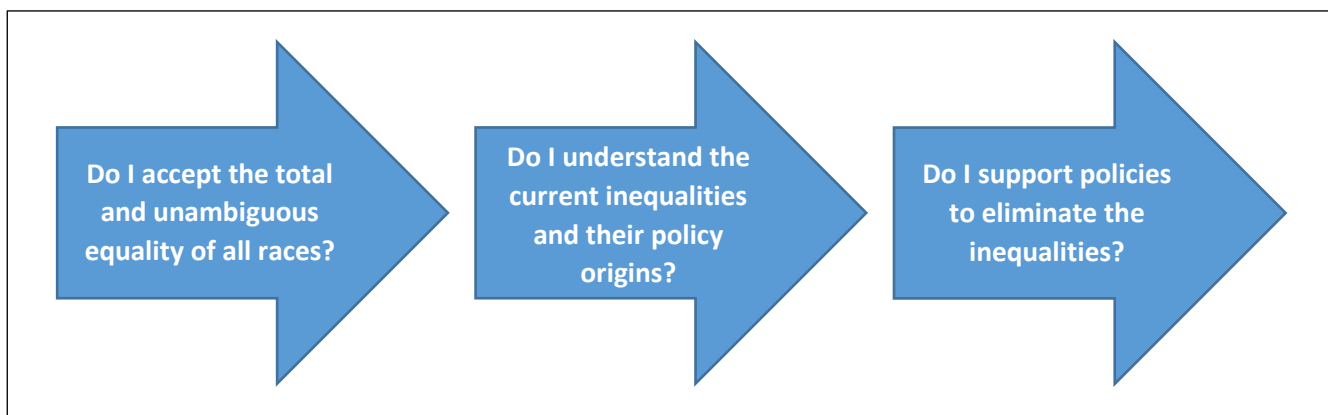
**Goal:** To use the findings of the *Hard Facts* report as a springboard to enlist a group of individuals in becoming community change agents based on antiracist concepts, using Ibram Kendi’s definition of an antiracist as: “one who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea.”

**Resources:**

- a. The report and a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the report may be downloaded from: [ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org)
- b. Ibram X. Kendi’s *How To Be An Antiracist*. New York: Random House, 2019
- c. Other reading material as determined by the group.

**Size of Group:** The size is not important, but a small group dedicated to a deeper learning is a good place to start.

**Approach:** Each group should design an approach for itself. It is suggested that each group member read the *Hard Facts 2020* report and Kendi’s book. A key to the antiracist concept is that the racial inequalities that we observe (and document) are the result of policies and practices, not the actions of individuals. So, to be an antiracist requires us to see the policy origins of an observed inequality and identify policy approaches to correct them. For example, the value of homes owned by African Americans in our region is equal to only 59% of those owned by Whites (see chart 33). Do we understand the policies that have contributed to this? Can we find advocate policy remedies? The graphic below illustrates this process.



One approach to this would be to have one or two general learning sessions followed by 3 to 5 sessions focused on “unpacking” the inequalities described in *Hard Facts 2020*. Participants might agree to do further reading in preparation for each topic discussion.

**Requirements:** The main requirement here is for individuals to be committed to the antiracist concept and to be willing to study the inequalities in our community. The group might want to share its work with a broader network. A good leader will be needed.



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[ACTRochester.org](http://ACTRochester.org)

### Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Greater Rochester Region

Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates counties

Indicator	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Source Notes
<b>Infant mortality: number of infant deaths prior to age one for each 1,000 live births</b>					
<b>Total rate per group - Monroe County</b>	5	15	10	NA	1
Rate as a percent of White	NA	+300%	+200%	NA	

<b>Children in Poverty: percent of children age 18 or younger living below federal poverty level</b>					
<b>Percent per group - US</b>	16%	35%	28%	11%	2
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+19 pts	+12 pts	-5 pts	
<b>Percent per group - NYS</b>	13%	30%	24%	18%	2
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+17 pts	+21 pts	+5 pts	
<b>Percent per group - region</b>	13%	49%	40%	13%	2
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+36 pts	+27 pts	0 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Monroe County</b>	12%	50%	42%	13%	2
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+38 pts	+30pts	+6 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Rochester</b>	43%	56%	55%	32%	2
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+13 pts	+12 pts	-11 pts	

1. ACT Rochester – Children and Youth – Infant mortality rate by race/ethnicity for Monroe County, Monroe County Department of Public Health, 2015-2017.
2. ACT Rochester – Children and Youth – Children in Poverty by race/ethnicity, US Census American Communities Survey, data averaged for 2014 to 2018.

05/27/2020

Indicator	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Source Notes
<b>Student Performance: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading: Percent “passing” [see note] NY State exam</b>					
<b>Percent passing per group - NYS</b>	58%	45%	43%	71%	3
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-13 pts	- 15pts	+13 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - our region</b>	52%	25%	27%	53%	3
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-27 pts	-25 pts	+1 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - Monroe County</b>	58%	25%	28%	52%	3
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-33 pts	-30 pts	-6 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - Rochester</b>	34%	18%	14%	23%	3
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-16 pts	-20 pts	-11 pts	

<b>Student Performance: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math: Percent “passing” [see note] NY State exam</b>					
<b>Percent passing per group - NYS</b>	62%	43%	43%	77%	4
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-19 pts	-19 pts	+15 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - our region</b>	57%	28%	31%	63%	4
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-29 pts	-26 pts	+6 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - Monroe County</b>	63%	28%	32%	63%	4
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-35 pts	-31 pts	0 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - Rochester</b>	38%	20%	22%	28%	4
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-18 pts	-16 pts	-10 pts	

3. ACT Rochester – Education – Student Performance on Grade 3 English by race/ethnicity, NY State Department of Education, 2019. Note: “passing” is defined as students achieving level 3 or higher on standardized exams.
4. ACT Rochester – Education – Student Performance on Grade 4 Math by race/ethnicity, NY State Department of Education, 2019. Note: “passing” is defined as students achieving level 3 or higher on standardized exams.

Indicator	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Source Notes
<b>Student Performance: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English: Percent “passing” [see note] NY State exam</b>					
<b>Percent passing per group - NYS</b>	53%	37%	39%	70%	5
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-16 pts	-14 pts	+17 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - our region</b>	48%	17%	20%	55%	5
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-31 pts	-28 pts	+7 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - Monroe County</b>	52%	16%	19%	55%	5
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-33 pts	-33 pts	+3 pts	
<b>Percent passing per group - Rochester</b>	24%	9%	9%	10%	5
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-15 pts	-15 pts	-14 pts	

<b>Graduation Rate: High School Cohort Graduation Rate</b>					
<b>Rate per group - NYS</b>	90%	75%	75%	90%	6
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-14 pts	-14pts	0 pts	
<b>Rate per group - our region</b>	91%	72%	75%	92%	6
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-19 pts	-16 pts	+1 pt	
<b>Rate per group - Monroe County</b>	92%	71%	74%	92%	6
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-21 pts	-18 pts	0 pts	
<b>Rate per group - Rochester</b>	64%	63%	63%	76%	6
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-1 pt	-1 pt	+12 pts	

5. ACT Rochester – Education – Student Performance on Grade 8 English by race/ethnicity, NY State Department of Education, 2019. Note: “passing” is defined as students achieving level 3 or higher on standardized exams.
6. ACT Rochester – Education - The number of students graduating on time (after four years of high school), as a percentage of their cohort. The cohort is the class of ninth graders beginning high school together from 2016-2019.

Indicator	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Source Notes
<b>Education Attainment: Percent of population 25 or older with four-year degrees</b>					
<b>Percent per group - US</b>	33%	21%	16%	53%	7
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-12 pts	-17 pts	+22 pts	
<b>Percent per group - NYS</b>	40%	24%	19%	47%	7
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-16 pts	-21 pts	+7 pts	
<b>Percent per group - our region</b>	35%	13%	16%	52%	7
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-22 pts	-19 pts	+17 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Monroe County</b>	42%	14%	16%	53%	7
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-28 pts	-26 pts	+14 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Rochester</b>	36%	10%	9%	35%	7
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-26 pts	-27 pts	-1 pt	

<b>Housing: Home ownership rates: Percent of owner-occupied housing units</b>					
<b>Percent per group - US</b>	69%	42%	47%	59%	8
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-27 pts	-22 pts	-10 pts	
<b>Percent per group - NYS</b>	64%	31%	25%	48%	8
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-37 pts	-39 pts	-16 pts	
<b>Percent per group - our region</b>	73%	35%	32%	55%	8
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-38 pts	-41 pts	-18 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Monroe County</b>	71%	32%	34%	53%	8
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-39 pts	-37 pts	-18 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Rochester</b>	43%	28%	27%	27%	8
Percentage point difference from White	NA	-19 pts	-16 pts	-16 pts	

7. ACT Rochester – Education – Education Attainment by race/ethnicity, US Census American Communities Survey, data averaged for 2014-2018.
8. ACT Rochester – Housing – Home Ownership Rate by race/ethnicity, US Census American Communities Survey, data averaged for 2014-2018.

Indicator	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Source Notes
<b>Housing Affordability: percent of annual income spent on rent</b>					
<b>Percent per group - US</b>	28%	35%	32%	27%	9
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+7 pts	+4 pts	-1 pt	
<b>Percent per group - NYS</b>	30%	35%	37%	36%	9
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+5 pts	+7 pts	+6 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Monroe County</b>	30%	45%	44%	30%	9
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+15 pts	+14 pts	0 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Rochester</b>	33%	47%	51%	31%	9
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+14 pts	+18 pts	-2 pts	
<b>Median household income: US Census median income</b>					
<b>Annual income per group - US</b>	\$63,917	\$40,156	\$49,225	\$83,898	10
Income as percent of White	NA	63%	77%	131%	
<b>Annual income per group - NYS</b>	\$73,584	\$46,178	\$46,259	\$72,131	10
Percentage point difference from White	NA	63%	63%	98%	
<b>Annual income per group - our region</b>	\$61,627	\$30,182	\$32,606	\$63,918	10
Income as a percent of White	NA	49%	53%	104%	
<b>Annual income per group - Monroe County</b>	\$64,468	\$30,034	\$31,331	\$62,159	10
Percentage point difference from White	NA	47%	49%	96%	
<b>Annual income per group - Rochester</b>	\$41,262	\$26,038	\$23,497	\$34,850	10
Percentage point difference from White	NA	63%	57%	84%	

- ACT Rochester – Housing – Affordable Housing: Median Gross Rent by race/ethnicity, US Census American Communities Survey, data averaged for 2014 to 2018.
- ACT Rochester – Financial Self Sufficiency – Median Household Income by race/ethnicity, US Census American Communities Survey, data averaged for 2014 to 2018 and stated in 2018 dollars.

Indicator	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Asian	Source Notes
<b>Economy: Unemployment Rate</b>					
<b>Percent per group - US</b>	4.9%	10.6%	6.8%	4.6%	11
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+5.7 pts	+1.9 pts	-0.3 pts	
<b>Percent per group - NYS</b>	4.8%	10%	7.8%	4.9%	11
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+5.2 pts	+3 pts	+0.1 pts	
<b>Percent per group - our region</b>	4.4%	13.8%	10.8%	3.9%	11
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+9.4 pts	+6.4pts	-0.5pts	
<b>Percent per group - Monroe County</b>	4.4%	14.1%	11%	4.1%	11
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+9.7 pts	+6.6 pts	-0.3 pts	
<b>Percent per group - Rochester</b>	6.7%	17.5%	15.7%	6.7%	11
Percentage point difference from White	NA	+10.8 pts	+9.0 pts	0 pts	

11. ACT Rochester – Economy – Unemployment Rate by race/ethnicity, US Census American Communities Survey, data averaged for 2014 to 2018.