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First Ever Racial Equity Index Provides Scorecard and Data to Drive Local Efforts to Tackle Structural Racism

New index reveals significant racial inequities even in the most prosperous cities and metros; provides data to help leaders develop targeted strategies for inclusive prosperity

OAKLAND, Calif. — Amid a nationwide reckoning with racism that is reverberating on the streets, in workplaces, and in government, community leaders are searching for real policy solutions. Today, the [National Equity Atlas released the Racial Equity Index](#), a first of its kind metric for 100 U.S. cities, 150 metros, and all 50 states on key indicators of prosperity and inclusion by race. The Index shows just how far all cities and metros have to go to correct systems perpetuating racial inequities. Even the best performing places exhibit significant racial disparities, and even the places with the most economic success post-recession fall short on equity—highlighting the need for targeted, race-conscious strategies for inclusive recovery.

Since 2014, the National Equity Atlas, a partnership of PolicyLink and the University of Southern California Equity Research Institute, has served as the nation’s most detailed report card on racial equity. The current moment calls for leaders to center equity in their policy and budget decisions, with movements demanding policy shifts and investments to correct injustices. The scorecard provides policymakers, activists, and researchers data to understand the state of equity in their community, and analysis for targeted policies to address their unique gaps and challenges.

“Racial inequity is the defining issue of our era, and we must meet it with strategies that match the scale of the challenge,” said **Michael McAfee, President and CEO of PolicyLink**. “The Atlas and Index provide the necessary data at the community level to craft solutions that dismantle structural racism.”

The National Equity Atlas’ Racial Equity Index makes data accessible and actionable to everyone – including the grassroots organizations that possess invaluable firsthand knowledge of inequities yet often lack the resources to gather, analyze, and display the quantitative data so valuable to policy campaigns to address them.

“The Atlas offers our leaders the truth about what the nation needs to rebuild, stabilize, and prosper, and that is taking racial disparities head on,” said **Manuel Pastor, Director, USC’s Equity Research Institute**. “Dismantling racial exclusion is the only way to secure the nation’s economic future. The National Equity Atlas hands policymakers and activists open access to data and a playbook for advancing intersectional equity agenda.”

[Key findings from the National Equity Atlas' Racial Equity Index include:](#)

- ***Every community is hindered by systematic racial inequities.*** San Jose, CA is the [highest-scoring region on the Index](#). Yet, even with the highest share of Black college graduates of any region (37 percent), there is a 23 percentage point Black-White disparity in terms of educational attainment, and the White-Latinx disparity is 44 percentage points (60 and 16 percent, respectively). And among college graduates, Black and Latinx workers earn \$12-\$17 less per hour than White and Asian workers.
- ***Inclusive prosperity remains elusive among America's metros and cities.*** The metros that have the best overall performance on the indicators tend to have wide racial disparities. Among the top 25 regions on the prosperity score, *none* are also in the top 25 on the inclusion score and 18 of them are in the bottom 50 on inclusion. The pattern for cities is not much better.
- ***Few cities with large Black populations are doing well on racial equity or for [Black prosperity](#) specifically.*** Of the 33 cities with more than 100,000 Black residents, only two are among the top 20 performers on the Racial Equity Index (Nashville and Norfolk), and 10 are among the bottom 20 performers (Atlanta, Baton Rouge, Birmingham, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Memphis, Newark, and New York). Only two—Raleigh and Durham—are among the top 20 performers for Black prosperity (and they are both in the same region).

Leaders in government and in cities across the country rely on this type of analysis to make meaning of data sets and target policies that respond to their communities and move toward inclusive prosperity.

“PolicyLink and the National Equity Atlas team provides crucial data and policy analysis for government officials and all city leaders seeking to develop real solutions to racial inequity,” said **Mitch Landrieu, founder and president of E Pluribus Unum and former mayor of New Orleans**. “We relied on this data when we launched Equity New Orleans, the first citywide racial equity initiative in the American South in 2017, and we are now using this data as part of our UNUM Fellows program to support elected officials in their own efforts to advance racial and economic equity.”

“This type of data and analysis is what grassroots leaders and policymakers need to address the deep layers of inequities in our country,” said **Carla D. Thompson Payton, Vice President for Program Strategy at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation**, “advancing racial equity requires understanding trends and what bold solutions can make a difference.”

The National Equity Atlas is committed to maintaining the most comprehensive, user-friendly free source of equity indicators deeply disaggregated by race/ethnicity, nativity, gender, ancestry, and income for communities across the nation.

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The National Equity Atlas, produced by PolicyLink and the USC Equity Research Institute, is America's most detailed report card on racial and economic equity. We equip movement leaders and policymakers with actionable data and strategies to advance racial equity and shared prosperity.