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2017 EQUITY PROFILE OF FRESNO COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS DRAMATIC INEQUITIES

FRESNO, Calif. — [Advancing Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in Fresno County](#), released today, highlights persistent inequities in income, wealth, health, and opportunity. The profile and accompanying [policy brief](#) were developed by PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at USC, in partnership with the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, and with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. To inform local decision making, the Leadership Counsel and PolicyLink are holding a panel discussion and community forum around equity in Fresno this morning at the Cecil Hinton Community Center in West Fresno.

“These findings confirm what community residents and advocates have long known—racial and place-based inequities continue to dramatically impact residents’ access to economic opportunity, housing, health and well-being in the Fresno County region,” says Ashley Werner, Senior Attorney at the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability. “We must continue to work together and strengthen our efforts to demand that our elected officials do not remain complicit but actively and strategically work to create opportunity for all.”

Since 2011, PolicyLink and PERE have engaged in a formal partnership to amplify the message that equity—just and fair inclusion—is both a moral imperative and the key to our nation’s economic prosperity. *Advancing Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in Fresno County* incorporates indicators that undergird policy solutions to advance health equity, inclusive growth, and a culture of health.

Key findings in the report include:

- Fresno has the 12th highest renter housing burden among the largest 150 metro areas in the country. The county’s Black and Latino renters are more likely to be burdened: 68 percent of Black renter households and 60 percent of Latino renter households are cost-burdened.
- Very low-income Black and Latino residents are extremely reliant on the regional transportation system and limited numbers have access to automobiles. 12 percent of Black workers who earn an annual income of less than \$15,000 use public transit compared with 1 percent of White workers.
- The average Fresno resident is exposed to more air pollution than 70 percent of neighborhoods nationwide, but Black and Asian or Pacific Islander residents have the highest rates of exposure.
- Latinos are nearly three times as likely as whites to be working full time with a family income less than 200 percent of the poverty level.
- At nearly all levels of education, Latino workers earn \$4 dollars less an hour than Whites.

“Residents and advocates have been making the moral case for equity for years, and have had some successes,” says James Crowder, Senior Associate at PolicyLink. “But as the federal government has proposed massive cuts critical neighborhood revitalization programs such as the Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds, we now need to start emphasizing the economic benefits of equity and racial inclusion. If racial gaps in income were closed, Fresno’s GDP would have been \$17.1 billion higher in 2014.”

The profile provides unique data and actionable solutions for residents, advocates, funders, business leaders, and policymakers seeking to reduce racial inequities and build a stronger Fresno. For example, the data reveal significant health inequities in West Fresno. These inequities should be addressed through public and private investments, including California's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program. Funded by \$140 million

from the state's cap and trade program, TCC aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve public health and environmental outcomes, and expand economic opportunity and shared prosperity in the state's most disadvantaged communities. The City of Fresno has been selected by the state to receive \$70 million of the \$140 million in funding allocated to the program. This engagement with Fresno advocates is also a part of the All-In Cities initiative at PolicyLink. Through this initiative, PolicyLink equips city leaders with policy ideas, data, and strategies to advance racial economic inclusion and equitable growth.

Full profile here: http://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/FresnoProfile_final.pdf

Policy brief here: http://nationalequityatlas.org/sites/default/files/EP_Summary-Fresno_County_4-14-17.pdf

About PolicyLink

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works®. For more information, visit PolicyLink.org

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

Leadership Counsel works alongside the most impacted communities to advocate for sound policy and eradicate injustice to secure equal access to opportunity regardless of wealth, race, income and place. Through co-powerment, organizing, litigation, policy advocacy, and research, we confront California's stark inequalities manifest in too many of California's low income communities and communities of color. For more information, visit LeadershipCounsel.org.