

National Equity Atlas

Equity Indicators for Tennessee

Produced for the UNUM Fellows, January 2022

PolicyLink

USC Dornsife
Equity Research Institute



About the Atlas

The [National Equity Atlas](#) is America's most detailed report card on racial and economic equity, produced through a partnership between PolicyLink and the USC Equity Research Institute. We equip movement leaders and policymakers with actionable data and strategies to advance racial equity and shared prosperity.

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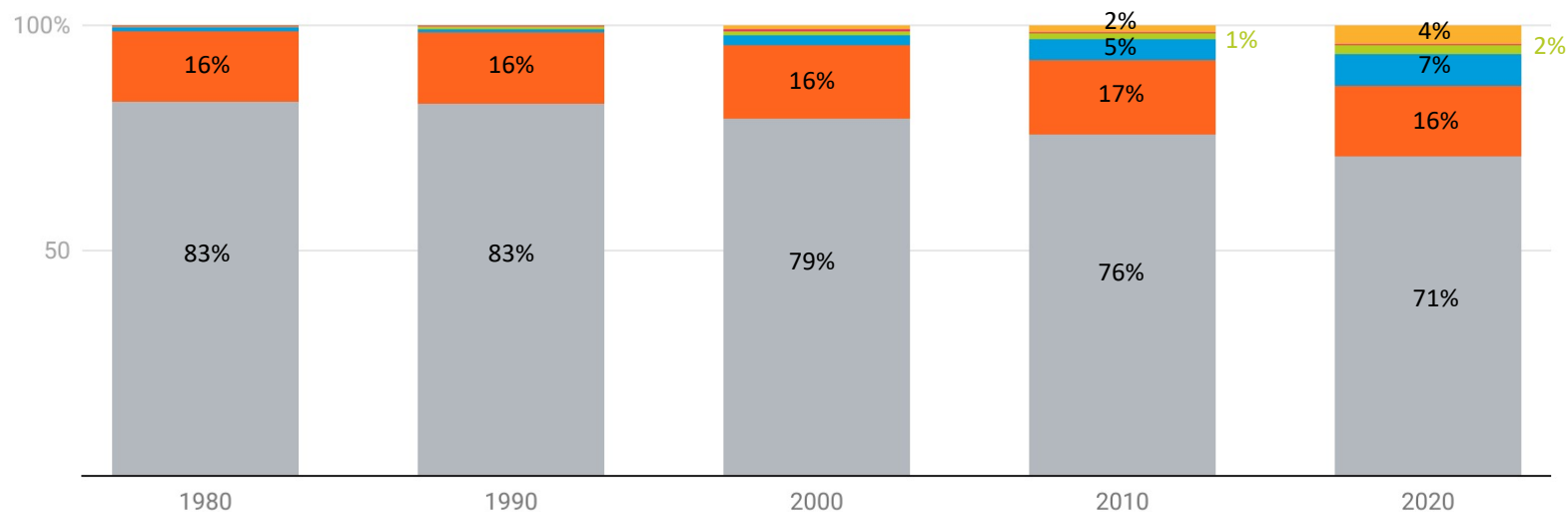
Demographics

DEMOGRAPHICS

The proportion of people of color has increased steadily over recent decades

Race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 1980-2020

White Black Latino Asian or Pacific Islander Native American Mixed/other



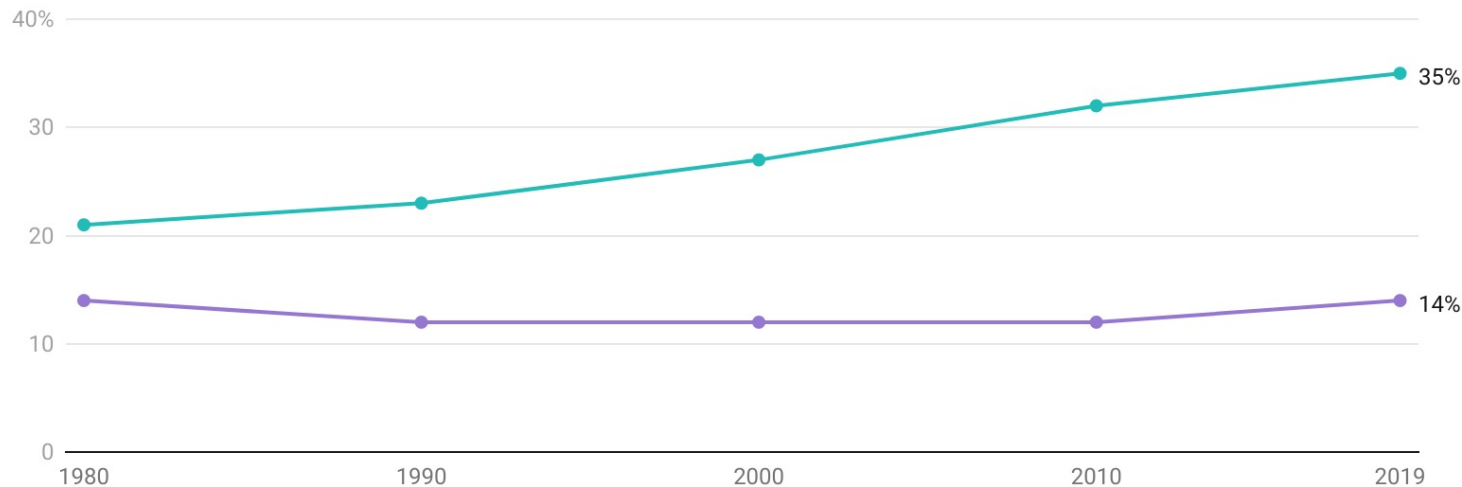
Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the decennial Census and five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2020 Decennial Census Redistricting Data. Note: Percentages are not displayed for groups that comprise <2% of the population.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The racial generation gap grew from 7 percentage points in 1980 to 21 percentage points today

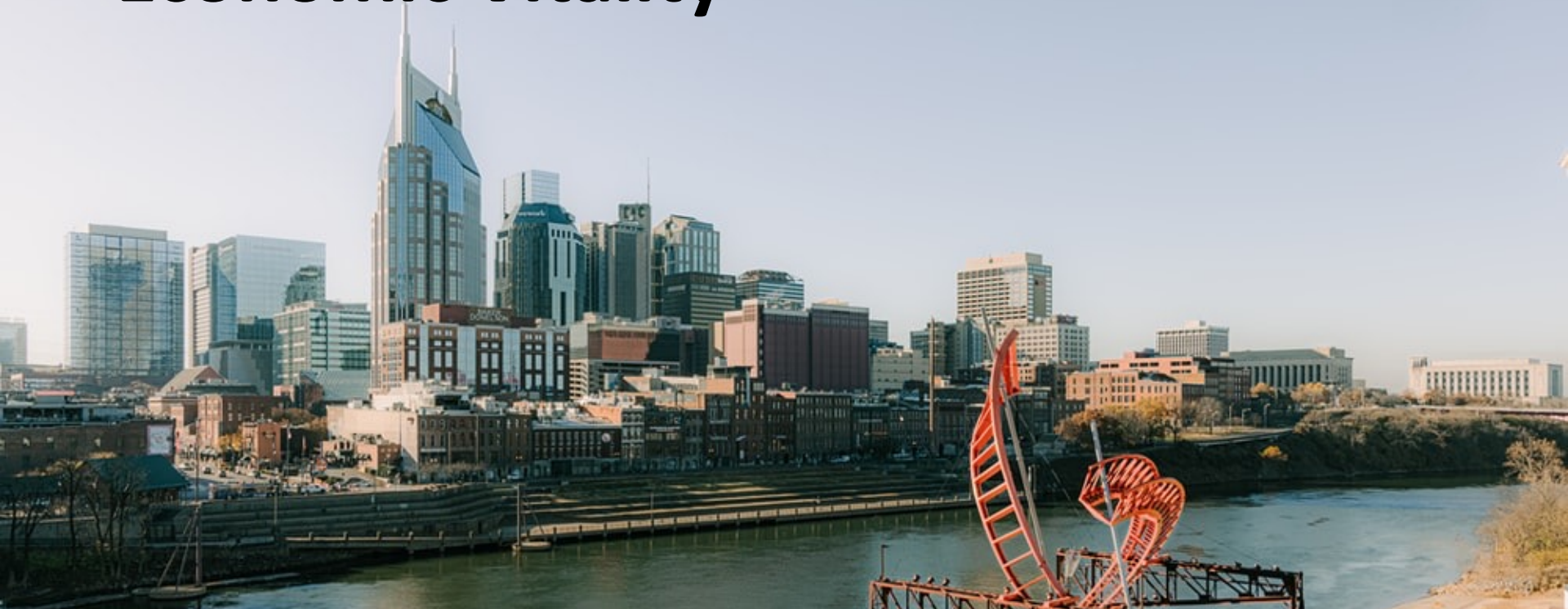
Percent people of color by age group, Tennessee, 1980-2019

— Percent of seniors who are people of color — Percent of youth who are people of color



Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the decennial Census and five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

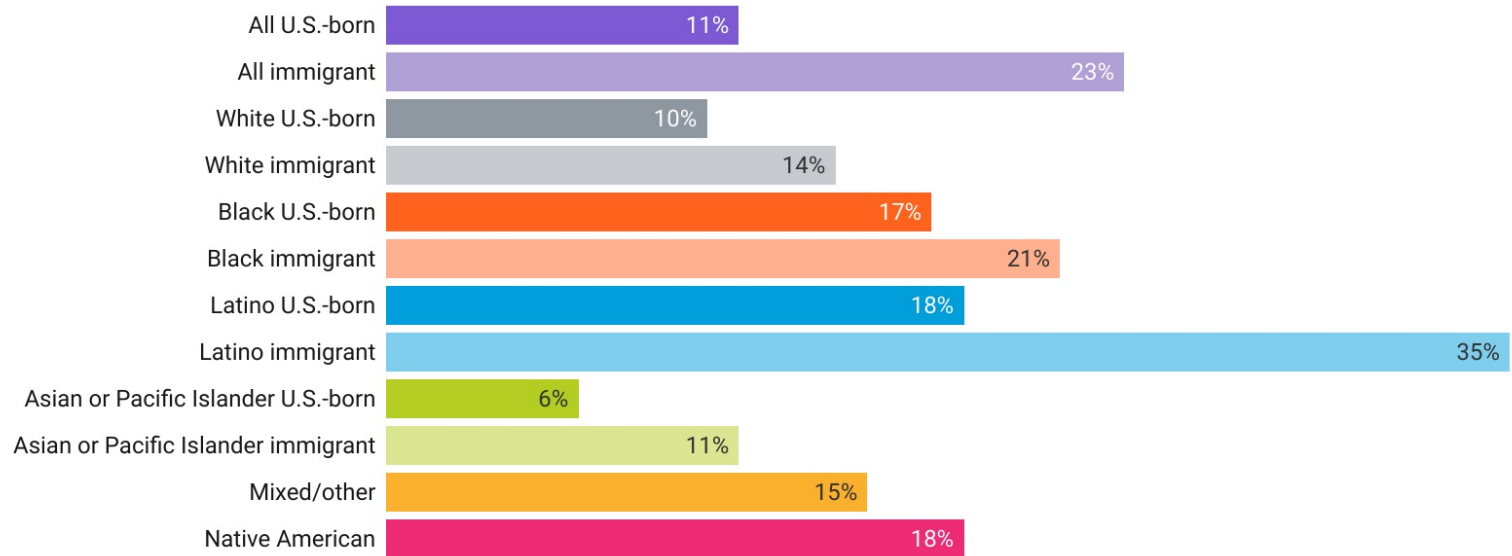
Economic Vitality



ECONOMIC VITALITY

More than one in three Latino immigrants are working full time and still economically insecure

Percent working poor by race/ethnicity and nativity, Tennessee, 2019

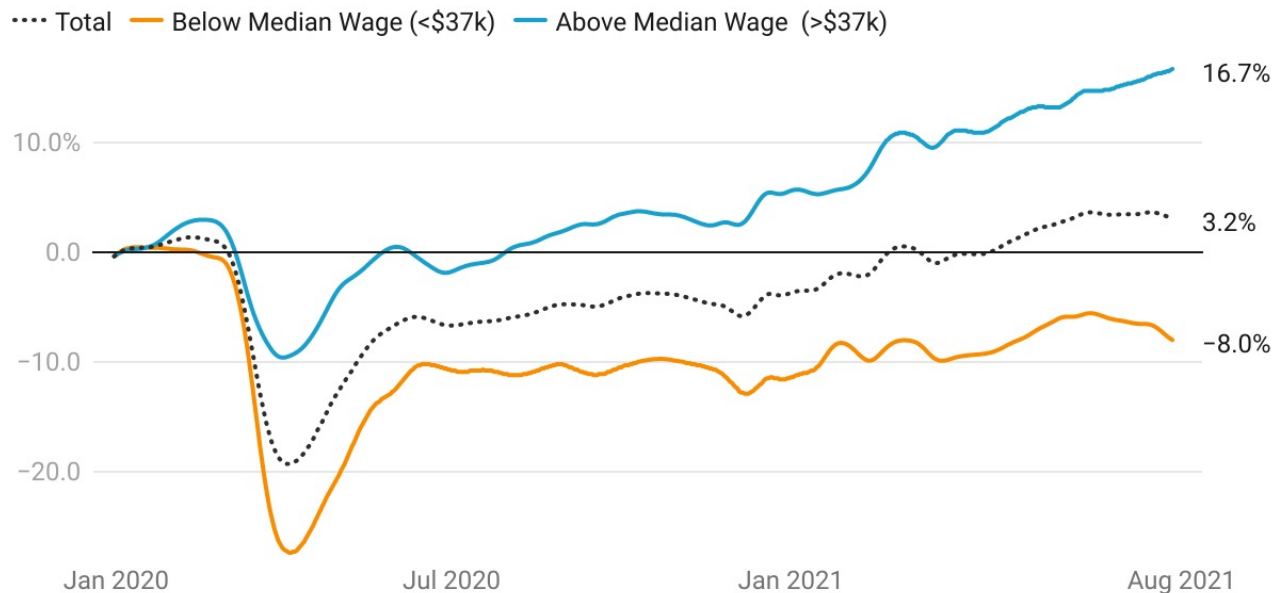


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of 2019 five-year American Community survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Employment in higher-wage jobs has grown relative to January 2020, while employment in lower-wage jobs remains down

Employment levels relative to January 2020, Tennessee

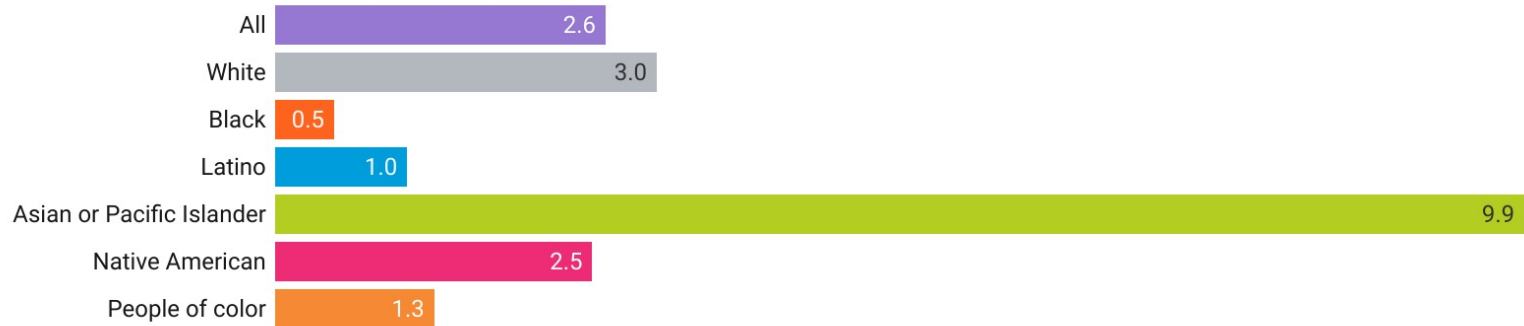


Source: Economic Opportunity Insights Tracker data from Paychex, Intuit, Earnin and Kronos

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Black entrepreneurs are highly underrepresented among firms with paid employees

Firms (per 100 workers) by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2018

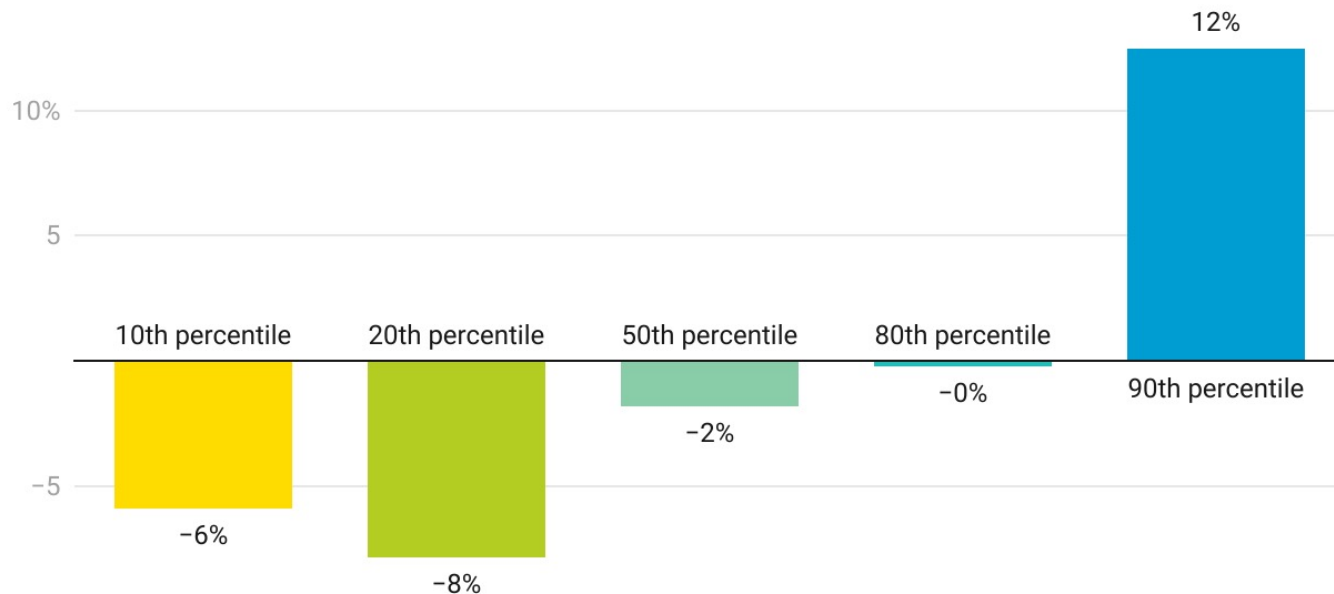


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the Annual Business Survey and NES-D series; the Survey of Business Owners; and the American Community Survey

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Only workers at the top of the income distribution have seen positive income growth since 1980

Earned income growth for full-time wage and salary workers, Tennessee, 1980-2019



Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 1980 decennial Census and the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Nearly two-thirds of Latino residents in the state are having financial difficulties

Difficulty paying usual household expenses in the last seven days by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey, Week 40 (December 1-December 13, 2021), Housing Spending Table 1

Readiness

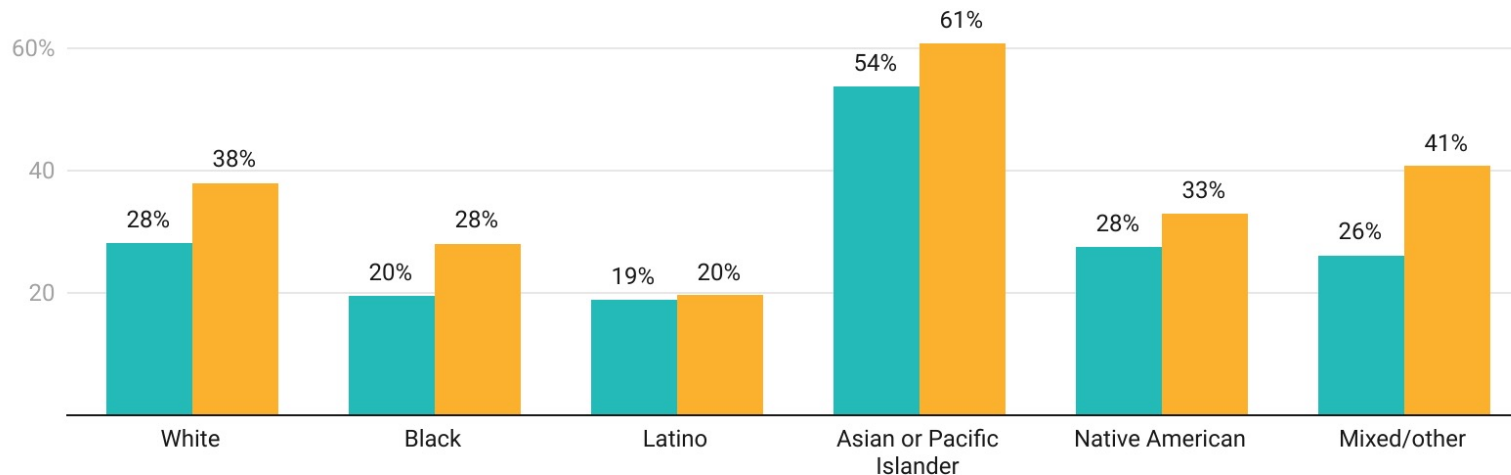


READINESS

Despite improvements, just 28 percent of Black adults and 20 percent of Latino adults have an associate's degree or higher

The share of the population age 25-64 with an AA degree or higher by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2000-2019

2000 2019

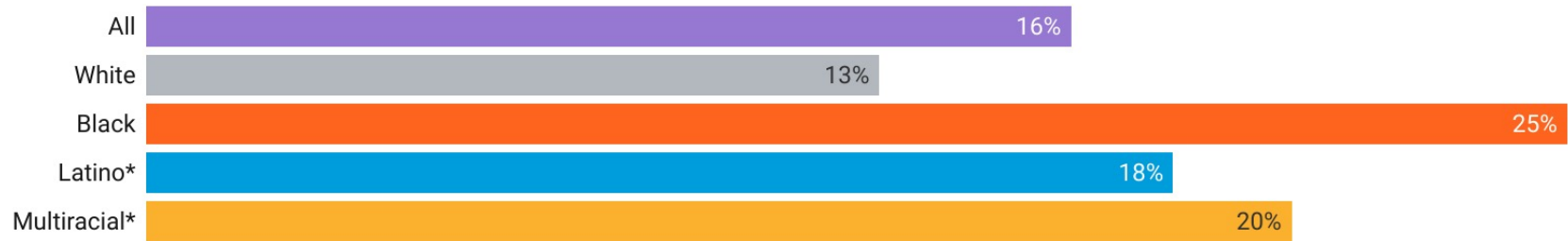


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

READINESS

One in four Black students borrowed more than \$26,500 for their undergraduate education

Percent who borrowed \$26,500 or more for undergrad by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2016



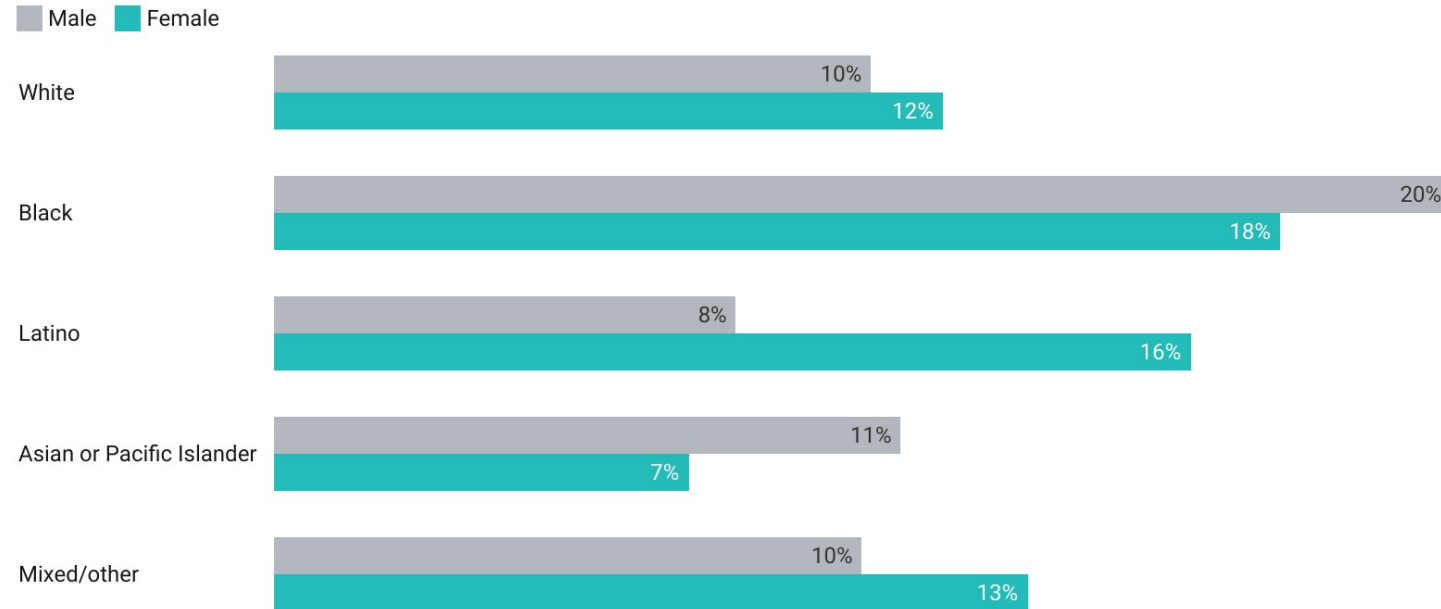
Source: National Postsecondary Student Aid Study from the National Center for Education Statistics

*Interpret data with caution. Estimate is unstable because the standard error represents more than 30 percent of the estimate.

READINESS

One in five young Black men and 18 percent of young Black women are disconnected from school and work

Percent of 16 to 24 year olds not working or in school by race/ethnicity and gender, Tennessee, 2019

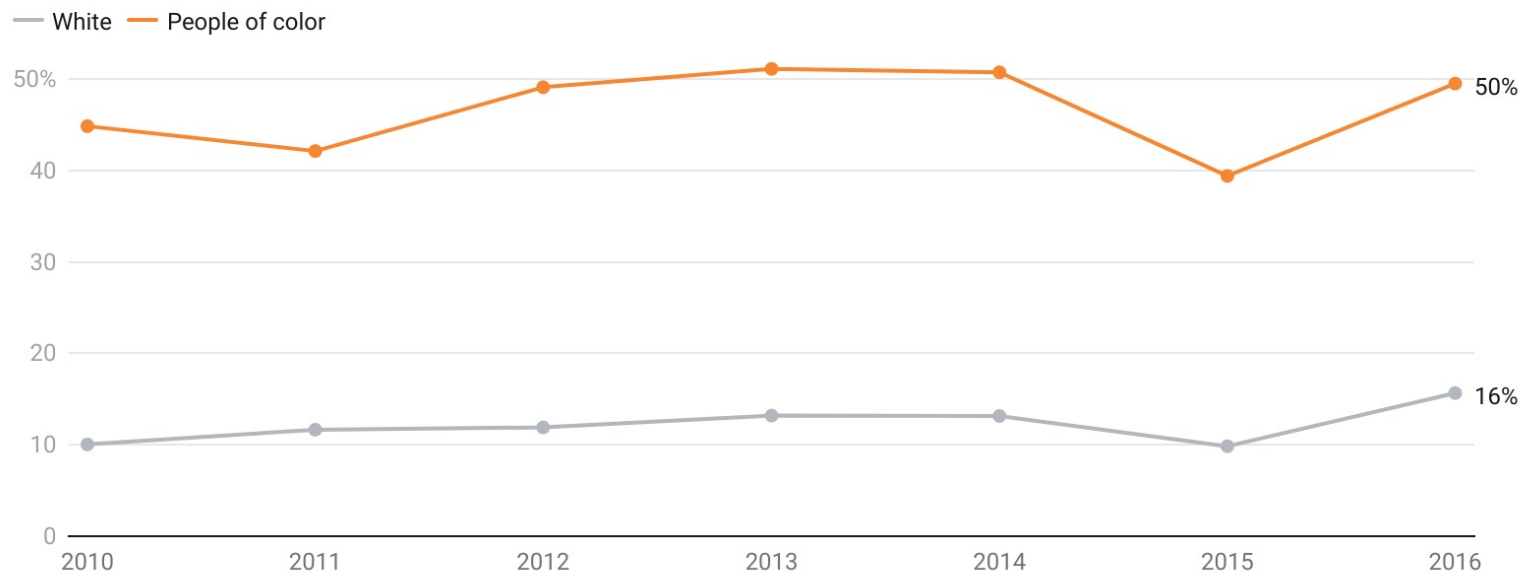


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Some data are not displayed due to small sample size.

READINESS

Half of all students of color attend high-poverty schools – more than three times the rate of white students

Percent of students in high-poverty public schools, Tennessee, 2010-2016

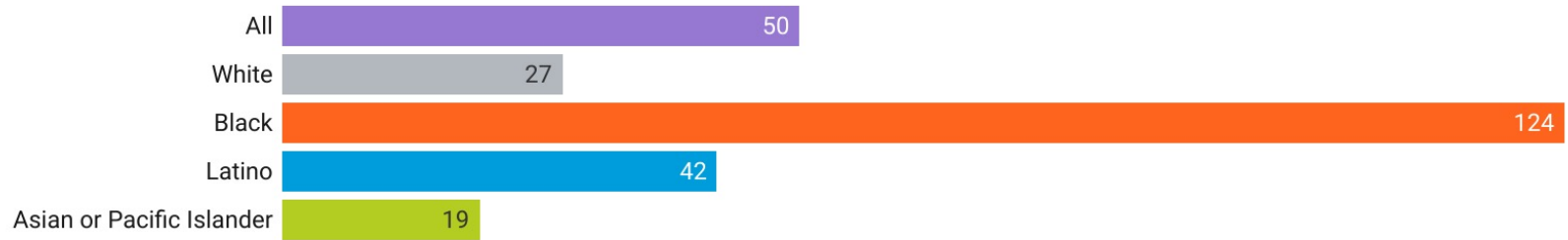


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of data from National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, and Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey.

READINESS

Black youth are more than four times as likely as white youth to be incarcerated

Youth incarceration rate per 100,000 juveniles by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2019

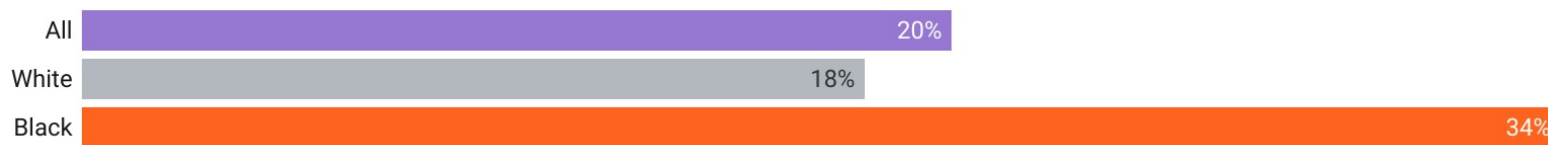


Source: Sickmund, M., Sladky, T.J., Puzzanchera, C., and Kang, W. (2021) "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement." Online. Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>.

READINESS

Black children are nearly twice as likely as white children to experience two or more adverse childhood experiences

Percent of children who have experienced two or more adverse experiences by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2018- 2019



Source: Child Trends analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Survey of Children's Health.

Note: Children were included if the respondent answered that the child had ever experienced two or more of the following adverse experiences: frequent socioeconomic hardship, parental divorce or separation, parental death, parental incarceration, family violence, neighborhood violence, living with someone who was mentally ill or suicidal, living with someone who had a substance abuse problem or racial bias.

Adverse childhood experience, also known as ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential.

READINESS

Asian and Latino residents have the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the state

Percent of population that has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, December 2021

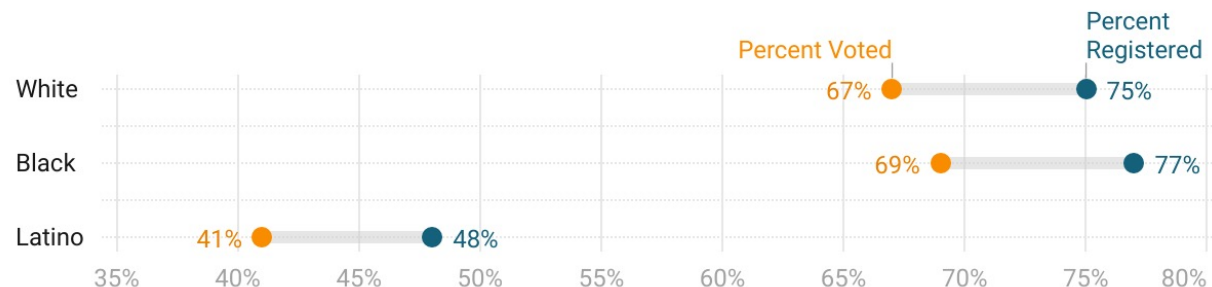


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) analysis of publicly available data on state websites; total population data used to calculate rates based on KFF analysis of 2019 American Community Survey data. Note: States vary in whether they include or exclude Hispanic people from their racial groups and in their racial classifications. Total population data used to calculate rates is matched to each states' racial classification approach. Rates may not match those reported on state websites due to differences in the source for total population data and/or ages included in the total population.

READINESS

In the November 2020 election, 69 percent of Black citizens voted compared with 41 percent of Latino citizens

Percent of citizens who are registered and voted by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, November 2020



Source: Table 4b from the Census Bureau's data on Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2020.

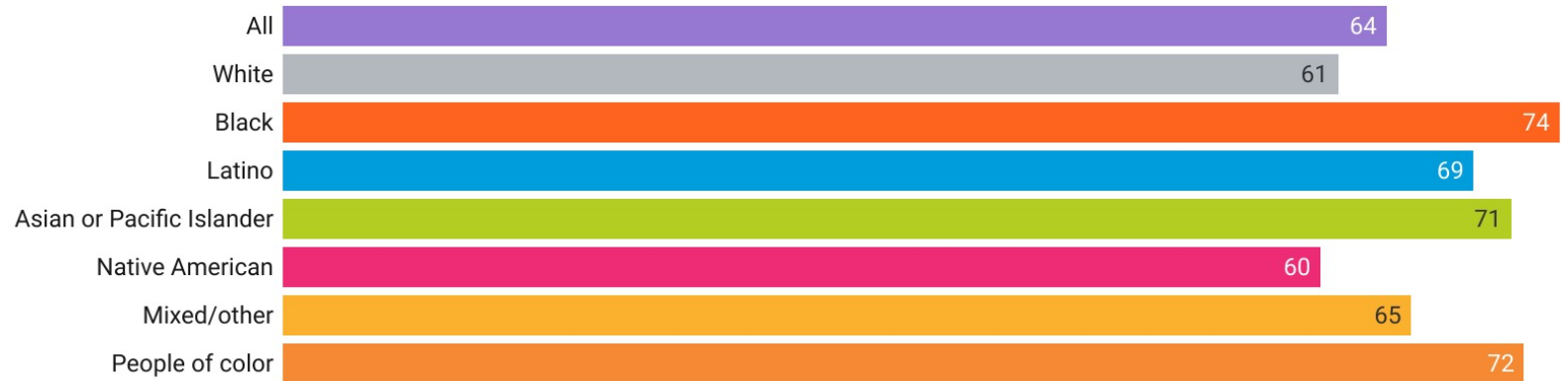
Connectedness



CONNECTEDNESS

Black residents are slightly more likely to live in neighborhoods with high exposure to air toxins

Air pollution exposure index by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2019

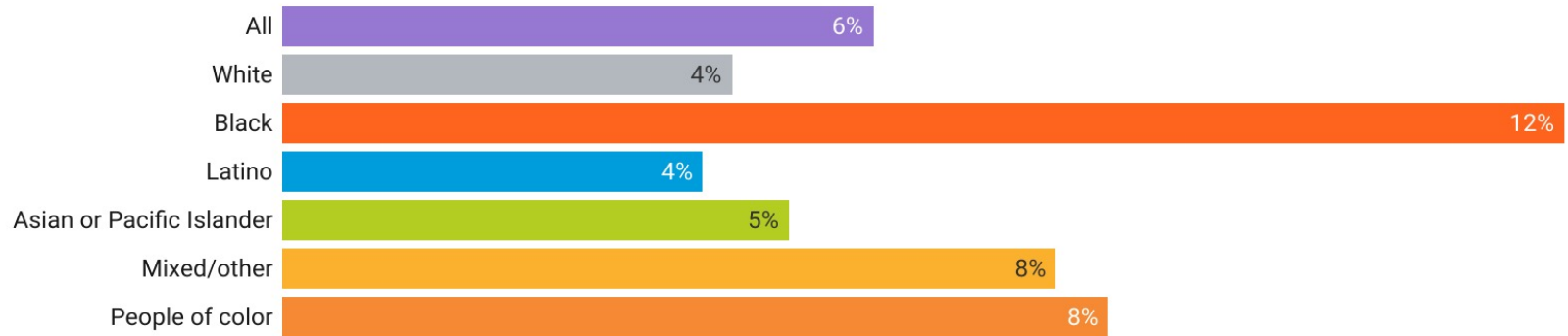


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of National Air Toxics Assessment data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

CONNECTEDNESS

Nearly one in eight Black households in Tennessee lack access to a vehicle

Percent of households without a vehicle by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2019



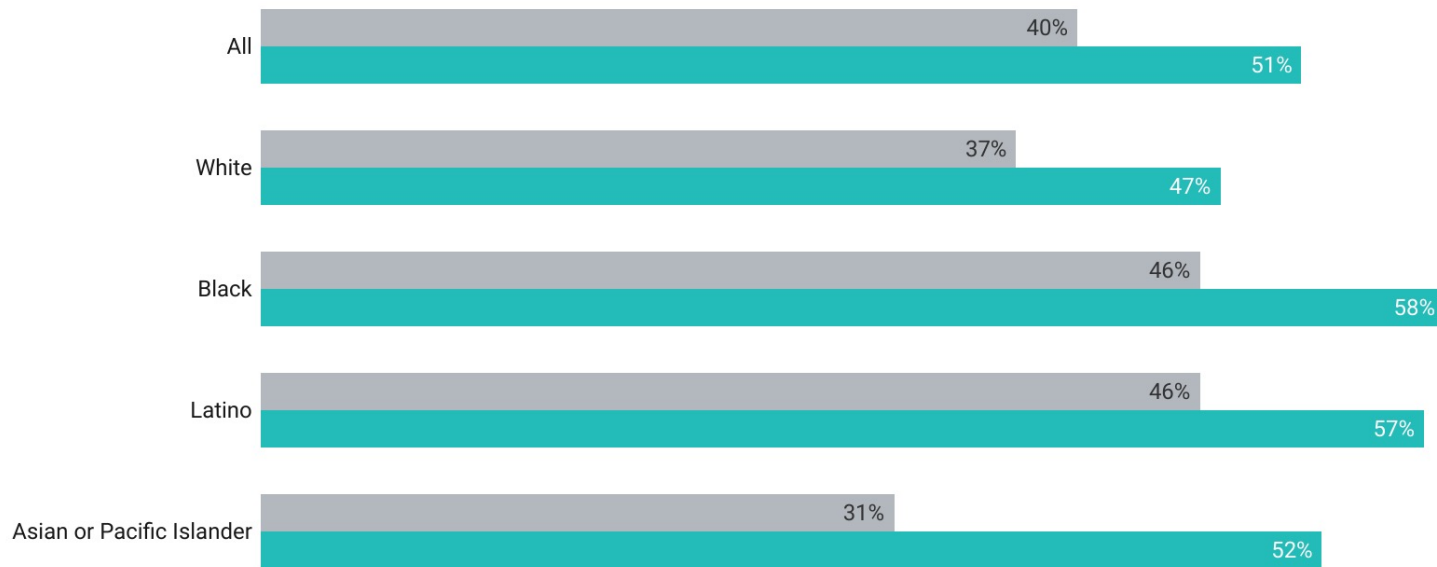
Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

CONNECTEDNESS

58 percent of households headed by Black women are paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent

Rent burden by race/ethnicity and gender, Tennessee, 2019

Male Female



Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

CONNECTEDNESS

Roughly 113,000 households (or 15 percent of renters) are behind on rent, and 49 percent are people of color

Percent of households behind on rent, Tennessee, 2021

...who are people of Color



...who have incomes <\$50k

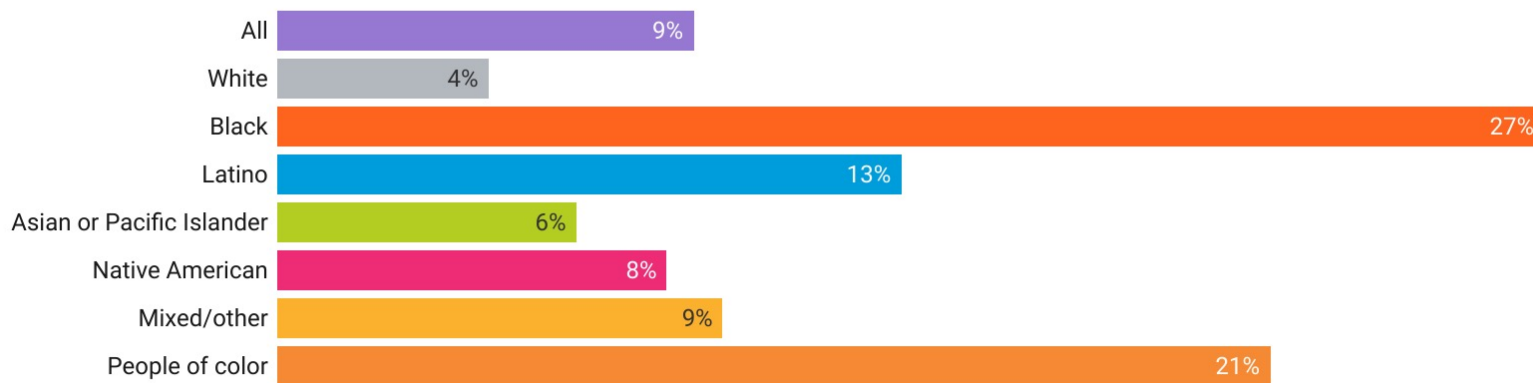


Source: Census Household Pulse Survey Public Use File, 2019 five-year data from the American Community Survey, and the Emergency Rental Assistance data from the US Treasury October report

CONNECTEDNESS

Black residents are more than six times as likely as white residents to live in high-poverty neighborhoods

Percent living in high-poverty neighborhoods by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2019

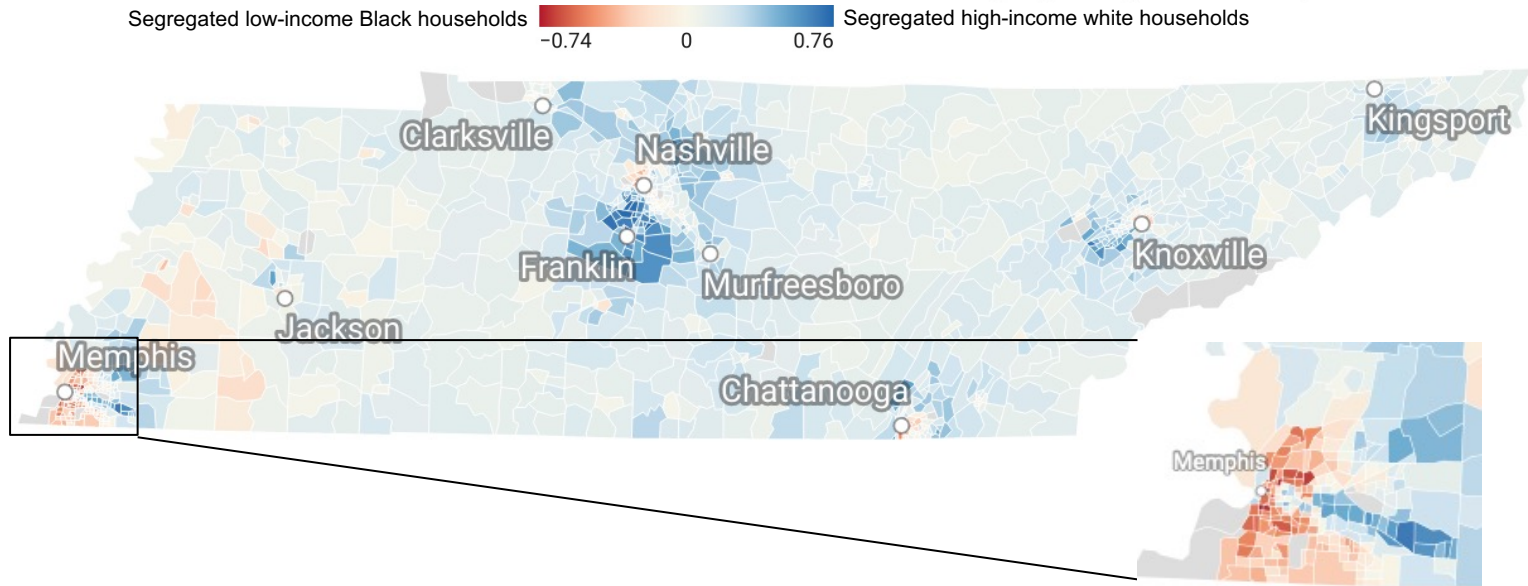


Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

CONNECTEDNESS

Race and class segregation remains very high across the state, particularly in Nashville and Memphis

Index of concentration at the extremes for racialized economic segregation, Tennessee, 2019



Source: National Equity Analysis of the 2019 American Community Survey five-year estimates. Notes: The index ranges from -1, signifying that the census tract is comprised only of low-income Black households and 1, signifying that the census tract is comprised only of high-income white households. Census tracts with less than 100 households were excluded (in grey).

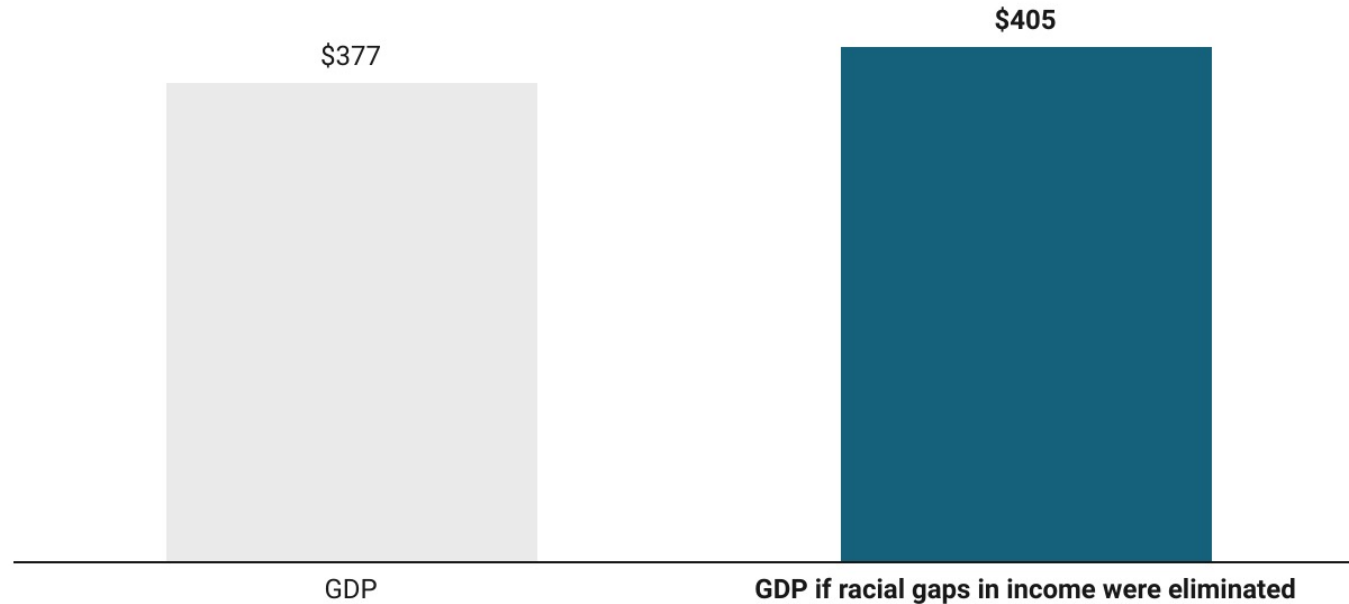
Economic Benefits



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

If there had been no racial gaps in income in 2019, the state GDP would have been about \$28 billion larger

Actual GDP and estimated GDP with racial equity in income (billions), Tennessee, 2019



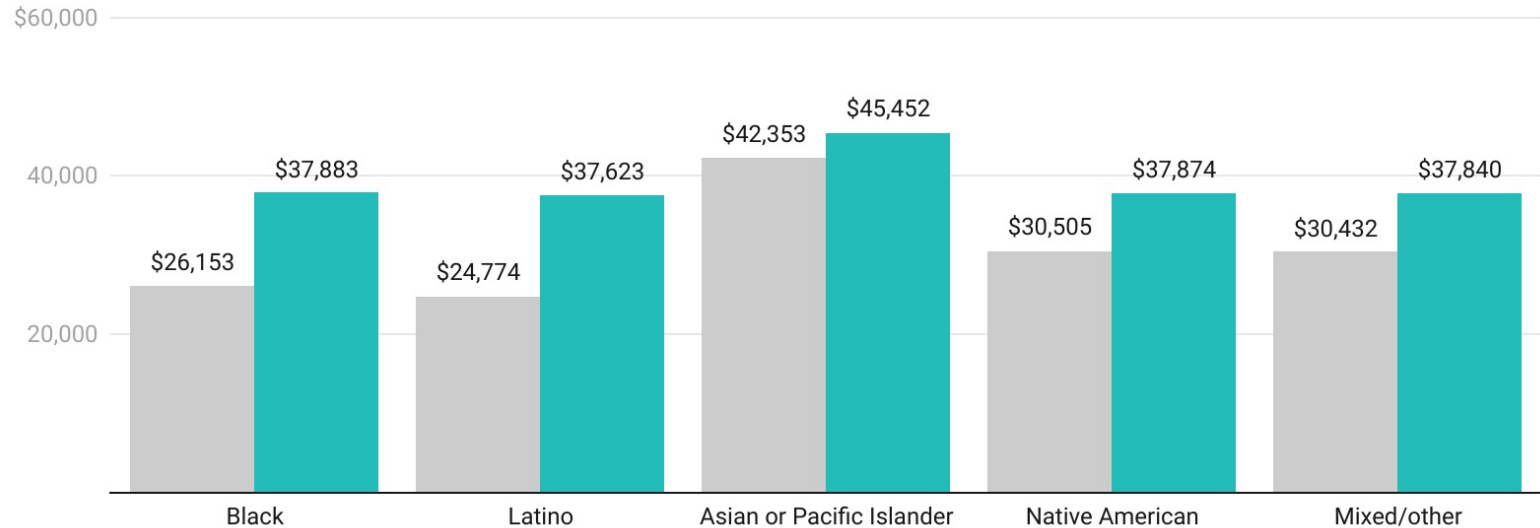
Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Black and Latino residents would see the largest income gains with racial equity in employment and wages

Income by race/ethnicity, Tennessee, 2019

■ Average income ■ Average income with racial equity



Source: National Equity Atlas analysis of the 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

Data Notes

Data for 2010 and 2019 represent five-year averages (i.e., 2006-2010 and 2015-2019).

Data for certain race/ethnicity categories are excluded due to small sample size of survey respondents.

High-poverty neighborhoods are defined as census tracts with a poverty rate of 30 percent or higher.

Housing burden is defined as renter-occupied households that are spending more than 30 percent of income on housing costs.

High-poverty schools are defined as public elementary and secondary schools with 75% or more students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Working poor is defined as those who work full-time and have a family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.