

Empowering Black Long Island: How Equity Is Key to the Future of Nassau and Suffolk Counties

PolicyLink



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Overview

With approximately three million residents, Long Island is home to world-class research, medical, and academic institutions that are fueling a new innovation economy. Despite the region's achievements, the American dream that Long Island was built to fulfill remains out of reach for many residents, particularly Black families in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Equity—just and fair inclusion—is the key to success and prosperity for these families, communities, and the region as a whole.

Closing racial income gaps would result in the average Black income increasing by over \$22,000. Long Island as a whole stands to gain a great deal from addressing racial inequities—in 2014 alone, the region's economy could have been nearly \$24 billion stronger if its racial gaps in income had been closed. To build a sustainable Long Island economy, public, private, and nonprofit leaders across the region must commit to advancing policies and strategies that increase health equity, wealth, and economic resilience of all Long Islanders.

Introduction

Long Island, a region east of New York City, holds its place in history as the nation's first suburb. Today, Long Island boasts some of the country's top schools, consistently ranks among the best places to live,¹ and serves as a destination for wealthy vacationers. It has grown its own job base, and is home to world-class research, medical, and academic institutions that are making advances in the fields of health, energy, and technology and are fueling a new innovation economy. But while the region has changed in many ways, its identity as an exclusive community has remained. Explicitly racist policies and practices shaped Long Island from its very beginning, creating segregated neighborhoods and fostering racial inequities.

Beginning in the 1920s, developers began transforming Long Island's backwoods and farmlands into the nation's first suburban communities. As areas of New York City, such as Brooklyn, became more urbanized and Long Island developed, many Black families moved to Long Island to take advantage of jobs in roadway building, construction, grounds keeping, and estate services. As economic opportunities increased for Black Long Islanders, some residents resisted these changes by aggressively pushing for segregated neighborhoods.²

After World War II, development on the island skyrocketed, with the most famous project being Levittown, in the Town of Hempstead, where more than 17,000 homes were built with restrictive covenants in place at the time that barred the sale of homes to Black families.³ Many of these families were those of Black soldiers who made it into the middle class during the war effort, but found they could not extend those privileges to their families even with passage of the GI Bill. Facing discrimination, Black residents settled in unincorporated areas with pre-existing Black populations. By the 1960s, communities such as the Village of Hempstead (not to be mistaken for the Town of Hempstead), as well as the Village of Freeport, and the hamlets of Roosevelt and Wyandanch had become home to a growing Black middle class, but segregation limited the opportunities available to these families.

Despite the region's achievements, the American dream that Long Island was built to fulfill remains out of reach for many residents, particularly Black families in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Black workers have seen their wages decline since 2000, and face an unemployment rate of 8.7 percent, according to analysis by PolicyLink and PERE. Black residents in the region have a higher prevalence of obesity, diabetes, and asthma compared to most racial and ethnic groups. And, Black Long Islanders are among those most burdened by the high cost of housing.⁴

At the same time, Long Island is becoming increasingly diverse—by 2050 nearly two in three residents will be persons of color.⁵ The inequitable growth occurring on Long Island not only is unjust, but also is economically unsustainable for the region—research shows that inequality and racial segregation inhibit economic prosperity, while diversity and inclusion fuel innovation and growth.⁶ Despite this demographic reality, many of Long Island’s more affluent residents are resistant to change. Residents are deeply attached to the communities they chose as they exist today, with their low-density neighborhoods, their particular schools, and even their neighbors.

This policy brief, and the accompanying data profile, *An Equity Profile of Long Island*, examine the current state of Black Long Islanders and reveal stark inequities across dozens of indicators tracking health, economic success, education, and access to opportunity.⁷ Ninety-one percent of all students in high-need districts—or districts with low resources—are Black or Latino, even though only 8 percent of all Long Island students attend high-need school districts.⁸ More than 63 percent of Black Long Islanders are rent burdened compared to just under 54 percent of White renters.⁹ Only 63 percent of Black households across Nassau and Suffolk counties are homeowners compared to 85 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.¹⁰ In addition, almost half of all Black homeowners are cost burdened compared to just over 39 percent of non-Hispanic White households.¹¹

Moreover, the last financial crisis, which saw some of the nation’s highest rates of foreclosure, hit the Black community even harder than other communities on Long Island. Black workers have seen their wages decline 6 percent since 2000 compared to a 3 percent gain for their White peers, and face an unemployment rate of 8.7 percent compared to 5.6 percent for White workers. Further, Long Island has one of the highest rates of Black-White segregation in the country: more than two-fifths of all U.S. census block groups on the island did not have a single Black resident in 2014, while other block groups are dominated by Black residents.¹² Dismantling these structural barriers to opportunity is critical for the future of Black Long Islanders. Furthermore, it is imperative for the whole community. Income inequities mean fewer dollars to spend in the local economy or to invest in savings for families’ futures. Wealth inequities mean fewer homebuyers and entrepreneurs. Health inequities are a drag on household budgets and cost businesses in terms of low worker productivity and high turnover.

Health equity, in particular, can guide leaders toward a new path of shared prosperity. As defined by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy. Social determinants of health—the factors outside of the health-care system that impact health, such as education, employment, income, family and social support, community safety, air and water quality, and housing and transit—play a fundamental role in health outcomes and shape community environments.¹³ Healthy people are better able to secure jobs, fully participate in society, and contribute to a vibrant regional economy. In fact, research shows that your zip code has more of an impact on your life expectancy than your genetic code.¹⁴

Long Island stands to gain a great deal from addressing racial inequities. According to the analysis, the region’s economy could have been nearly \$24 billion stronger in 2014 if its racial gaps in income had been closed: a 13 percent increase. Closing racial income gaps would result in the average Black income increasing by over \$22,000.¹⁵ As Long Island’s population becomes increasingly diverse and as its economic base grows, the need for a new growth model driven by equity—just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential—is more urgent than ever before. Achieving equity will require partnership among policymakers, community organizations, residents, and the private sector. If we can come together, we can increase health, wealth, and economic resilience for all Long Islanders.

In this report, we describe the state of racial equity on Long Island, explain the challenges to inclusive growth, and present a set of policies and strategies to jumpstart a new growth model driven by equity. This report includes the following sections.

- **The State of Racial and Economic Inclusion on Long Island: Top Research Takeaways** describes the region’s demographic changes, as well as key indicators of the economic and living conditions of Black residents.
- **Barriers Inhibiting Change on Long Island** describes the complex political and social context leaders on Long Island must work within and around.
- **Advancing Equitable Growth on Long Island: Policy and Strategy Priorities** presents policy priorities to achieve shared prosperity and strategies private and philanthropic institutions can use to advance economic inclusion and resilience for Black residents.

The State of Racial and Economic Inclusion on Long Island: Top Research Takeaways

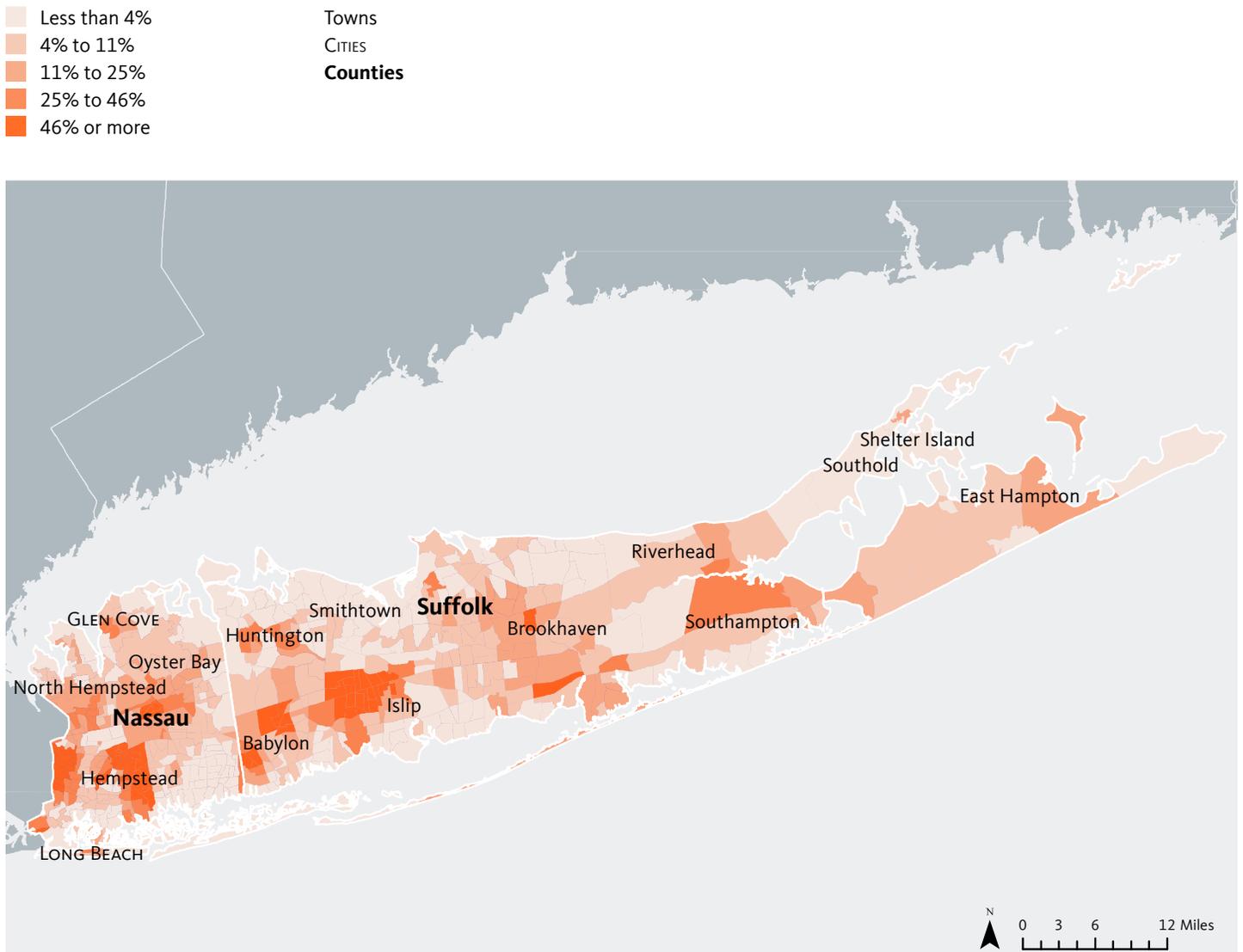
Long Island’s Racial Demographics Are Rapidly Changing

While the country is poised to become majority people of color by 2044, Long Island is projected to far outpace the nation by becoming majority people of color in the early-2030s. Today, 33 percent of the region’s residents are people of color, including a diverse mix of racial and ethnic groups, which is lower than the national average. This means that the projected demographic

change rate is incredibly steep. In Nassau and Suffolk counties, Latinos make up 16 percent of the population, Black residents make up 9 percent, and Asians and Pacific Islanders account for 6 percent of the total population. Latinos and Asians/Pacific Islanders are driving growth and change in the region and will continue to do so over the next several decades. Although the region is increasingly diverse, it is still among the most racially segregated regions in the country (see map below).¹⁶

Racial segregation persists on Long Island and the Black population remains concentrated in certain towns

Percent Black Population by Census Block Group, 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Note: Data represent a 2010 through 2014 average.

Long Island's Segregation Creates Uneven Access to Opportunity and Hinders Growth

Despite growing diversity, Long Island continues to be among the most racially segregated regions in the country, particularly in terms of Black-White segregation. According to U.S. census data, approximately 42 percent of block groups—subdivisions of census tracts with a population between 600 and 3,000—on Long Island did not have a single Black resident in 2010–2014, including several in the Town of Hempstead that neighbor block groups that are majority Black.¹⁷ In fact, Black Long Islanders tend to live in segregated communities regardless of their income, and a recent study by ERASE Racism, “Housing and Neighborhood Preferences of African Americans on Long Island,” found that real estate agents continue to steer Black Long Islanders away from predominately White areas. Racial residential segregation is a fundamental cause of health disparities, and places a drag on economies, putting Long Island's long-term economic future at risk.

Young People Are Leaving Long Island

In addition to the rapidly changing racial demographics, Long Island is experiencing an exodus of young people. From 1990 to 2014, Long Island's population between the ages of 18 and 34 dropped 16 percent,¹⁸ and, according to a public opinion survey, 72 percent of young Long Islanders say they are likely to leave the area by 2020.¹⁹ Part of the reason is the high cost of living on Long Island, but—like elsewhere in the country— young people seem to prefer a more urban lifestyle. For example, 70 percent of young Long Island residents ages 18–34 support raising height limits in local downtowns to build apartments, making local downtowns more residential, and a majority prefer living in dense, more walkable neighborhoods.²⁰

A legacy of segregation

“My wife and I are inner city kids from Harlem, New York, and we moved to Long Island in 1950. I had recently been discharged from the service in 1949,” explained Eugene Burnett, an 88-year old veteran of World War II. Burnett has lived in the same house on Long Island for 67 years, but the journey to that house was a long one. After returning from abroad, Burnett and his wife decided that given the conditions of Harlem at the time, they wanted to raise their children in a better environment. “I was looking in the newspapers and I read about Levittown, so I got one of my army buddies and we traveled to Levittown.”

After a long drive, Burnett was amazed by the modern conveniences of the homes in Levittown—refrigerators, washing machines—and expressed interest in a house. He recalled the reaction of the salesman: “He looked at me and said ‘Listen, it’s not me, but the owners of this establishment have not at this time decided whether or not they were going to sell to Negroes.’ And I was shocked at that. In New York, I didn’t think things like that happened.”

Eventually, Burnett and his family settled in Amityville, where they lived for the next 10 years. When he and his wife decided to move for a better school district, Burnett was faced with the same racist barriers. “I had zeroed in on a house in the Wheatley Heights section of Wyandanch, but the president of the civic association put up a thousand dollars to block us from buying the house,” he explained. His luck changed when a woman called the police department in Babylon, where he was on desk duty, asking if he was the sergeant interested in buying a house in Wheatley Heights, and explaining that she’d sell to him.

Burnett’s family would become the first Black family in the neighborhood. Even with the successful purchase, Burnett knew of Black families moving into White neighborhoods and having their houses burned down, so he made the decision to move his family in under the cover of night. “I remember that night when I closed the gate and I sat up all night, sitting at the door because I had my three babies in here.” In the weeks and months that followed, the Burnett family experienced an unwelcome neighborhood, particularly one man who would yell names at them from across the street. “That particular guy became a beautiful person. We became very close,” he recalled. “It’s a very strange thing having those feelings and him bringing his older son to me to get advice when I was in uniform. I had the police car parked in the driveway and he brought his son to me. Racism is a strange creature.”

Reflecting on his path, Burnett stated, “I can’t say nothing has changed. It has changed, but I’m not optimistic about the future because I think Long Island is very segregated.”

Black Communities Face the Greatest Health Challenges

Given the high rates of segregation, many Black Long Islanders are stuck in neighborhoods that are not conducive to their well-being. A growing body of research shows that the long-term success of children is undermined when they are raised in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage—neighborhoods characterized by poor housing, underinvested schools, inadequate public infrastructure, and high unemployment.²¹ In fact, poverty has been shown to genetically age children compared with their peers living above the federal poverty line.²²

It is not surprising then that Black Long Islanders face the greatest health challenges, including higher rates of diabetes, compared to their White counterparts (see chart below). Black Long Islanders, regardless of income, are exposed to higher rates of pollution than White Long Islanders. This contributes to the fact that Black residents are about twice as likely as White residents to have asthma. In addition, data show that Black Long Islanders are the most likely racial/ethnic group to die from heart disease.²³ The region's limited supermarket access (LSA) areas—or communities where residents must travel significantly farther to reach a supermarket compared to residents in well-served areas²⁴—are also home to higher

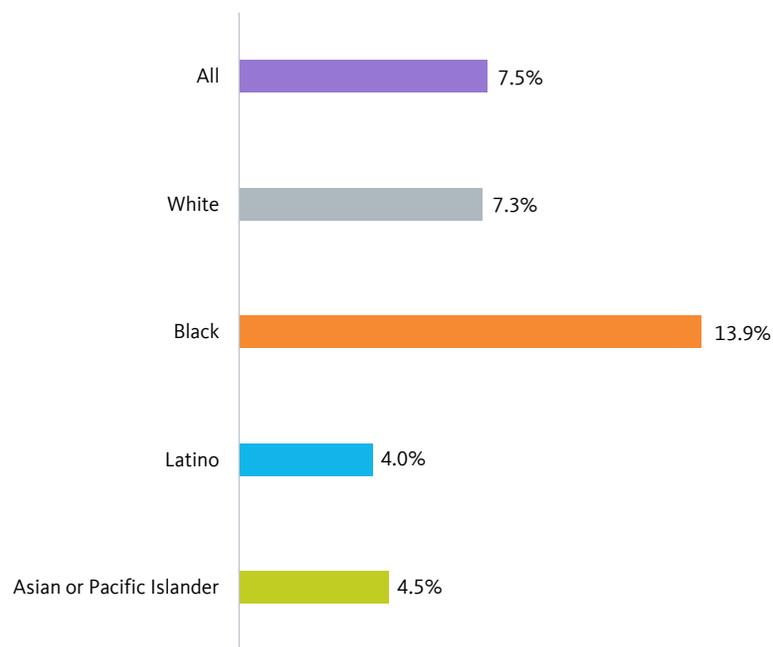
shares of people of color compared with other neighborhoods. This contributes to the fact that 66 percent of Black Long Islanders are overweight or obese.²⁵

Public Schools Are Separate and Unequal

As mentioned above, one of the largest consequences of enduring racial and economic segregation on Long Island is the persistence of school segregation, which has only gotten worse over the past two decades. In fact, 91 percent of all students in high-need districts are Black or Latino, despite the fact that only 8 percent of all Long Island students attend high-need school districts.²⁶ This is also causing some slight tensions across groups as high-poverty school districts have the greatest concentration of English-language learners, which means that those districts need to do more with limited resources.²⁷ By contrast, only 3 percent of Black students and 5 percent of Latino students on Long Island have access to the highest-performing school districts, compared to 28 percent of White students and 30 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students.²⁸ It is perhaps not surprising then that by 2014, more than 6,000 Black young people (ages 16 to 24 years) on Long Island were not in school or working. Overall, Black Long Islanders have less access to quality education and are much more likely to be unemployed than other groups.²⁹

Black adults are twice as likely as Whites to have diabetes

Adult Diabetes Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2012



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Note: Data represent a 2008 through 2012 average.

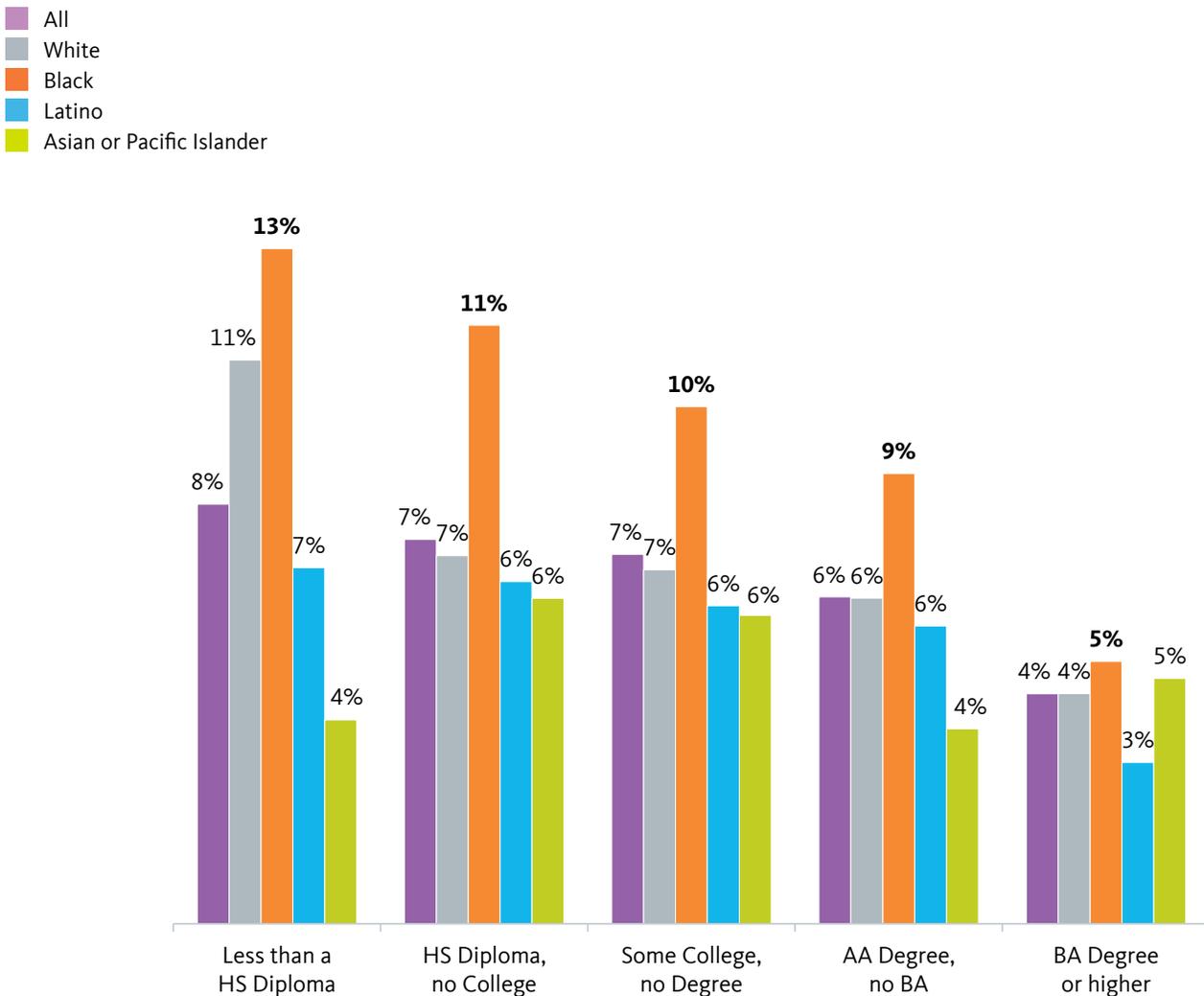
Long Island’s Economy Is Not Realizing the Full Contributions of Black Residents

Even when Black households secure employment, these workers have been experiencing declining wages. Over the past decade, median hourly wages have declined for Black workers while increasing for all other groups. Similar to national data, Black workers on Long Island are among those most likely to have low-wage jobs and are the most likely to be unemployed regardless of education (see chart below).³⁰ Further, according to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, in three years, 51 percent of jobs in the state of New York will require an associate’s degree or higher.³¹ While half the region’s workers

currently have that level of education, only 38 percent of African Americans on Long Island have an associate’s degree or higher, meaning Black workers are among the least prepared to compete in the future economy. In addition, the number of disconnected youth—young people who are not working or in school—is on the rise, and a majority (51 percent) of disconnected youth are youth of color—over 6,000 of whom are young Black people. As a result, economic fragility continues to grow with one in four Black Long Islanders living below 200 percent of poverty.³²

Black Long Islanders have higher unemployment rates than Whites at every education level

Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2014



Source: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series. Note: Data represent a 2010 through 2014 average.

Black Households Have Limited Transportation Options

In census tracts with a Black population of 46 percent or higher, 12 percent of households on average do not have a vehicle. This figure goes as high as 50 percent in parts of the Village of Hempstead (according to analysis in the data profile). As a result, very low-income African Americans are most likely to get to work using public transportation, but transit is unreliable and funding for the systems is continuously slashed, making it difficult to get to where jobs are. The three main job centers—Melville, Hauppauge, and Plainview—do not have a Long Island Railroad station.³³ This is particularly troubling as studies show that the relationship between transportation and social mobility is stronger than the relationship between mobility and several factors including neighborhood crime or even elementary school test scores.³⁴ Transportation is also critical to the regional economy as roughly one-third of Long Islanders who work in New York City commute daily on the LIRR.³⁵ In 2011 alone, 25 percent of personal income for Long Island residents was earned at jobs in New York City, a total of \$26 billion.³⁶

Barriers Inhibiting Change on Long Island

Economic Insecurity Is Hidden in Plain Sight on Long Island

One of the biggest challenges to addressing disparities on Long Island is that economic insecurity looks different in the region compared to other parts of the country. For example, the median household income of the Village of Hempstead, a majority Black village in Nassau County, is \$52,000, which is not far from the national average of \$56,000.³⁷ However, the cost of living on Long Island is much higher than the national average—a family of four needs an income of \$82,275 to cover all costs on Long Island, compared to roughly \$47,324 nationally. Therefore, the Village of Hempstead appears to be a relatively prosperous area at first glance.³⁸ Meanwhile, the median household income of neighboring Garden City, a mostly White village in Nassau County that abuts Hempstead Village, is \$150,000.³⁹ As a result, state and federal officials often overlook the challenges in communities like Hempstead given that federal poverty measures do not account for cost of living; thus, the region often misses out on needed assistance. While this is a phenomenon that affects White and Black communities alike, the effects are compounded in Black communities because of the magnitude of the needs and limited resources of those communities.

“Thank God I had a mother who held everyone accountable”

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Brandon V. Ray’s family moved to the Village of Hempstead when he was just one year old. A proud product of the Hempstead Public School System, Brandon graduated from Fulton Elementary School, ABGS Middle School, and was a member of Hempstead High School’s class of 2000. Having a mother who was on the PTA and active in the school district, Brandon recognized from a young age how necessary her involvement was to ensuring the best education possible, but her concerns also gave him an insight into how conditions in Hempstead compared to places like Garden City. “No one shared the poverty or wealth. [The poverty] all poured into Hempstead” and into the school district, he recalled. While he personally had an active mother and teachers, he noted how kids just around the corner from him lived in a “different world.” Concentrated in one block of the neighborhood was a notorious crime hotspot, and the community was riddled with parks in disrepair. Of his friends, Brandon was one of the only ones to go straight to college after high school. In 2004, Brandon graduated from Howard University in Washington, DC, with a bachelor of business administration, and returned to Hempstead. Since that time, he has been an active member of his community, particularly by serving as a trustee on the Hempstead Board of Education. Reflecting on his education, Brandon stated, “Thank God I had a mother who held everyone accountable—myself and the systems—so I could get the best education possible.”

Fragmented Governance Impedes Long Island’s Ability to Grow

Another factor that complicates the creation of an equitable growth model for the region is the many layers of municipal government. Nassau County and Suffolk County each have their own governments, with a county executive, legislature, and police department. The counties are also divided into towns, villages, hamlets, and Native American reservations, each relying on its own system of governance.*

For many towns, enduring levels of segregation have called into question the legitimacy of local political systems. As a 1996 *New York Times* article explained, many people believe that the “at-large electoral system, in which candidates seek votes townwide instead of within specific districts, dilutes the political power of Black residents, depriving them of the chance to elect candidates of their choice.”⁴⁰ For example, between 1784 and 1993, the Town of Hempstead elected only one Black council member. Community leaders went to the courts, claiming that voting at-large violated the Voting Rights Act. They won, and in 1999, Dorothy L. Goosby, who currently represents Hempstead’s first district, became the second Black council member and the first Black woman ever elected to the council.⁴¹ However, many towns, such as Islip, still rely on council districts. State Senator Phil Ramos, whose district includes Islip, explained, “Right now, we get out voted. ...the undesirable projects get put in our community.”⁴²

*Nassau County is divided into two small cities (Glen Cove and Long Beach), three towns (Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay), 64 incorporated villages within the three towns, and over 100 unincorporated areas (well-known unincorporated areas are known as hamlets). Suffolk County is divided into 10 towns (Babylon, Brookhaven, East Hampton, Huntington, Islip, Riverhead, Smithtown, Shelter Island, Southampton, and Southold), 32 villages across the 10 towns, and 116 hamlets. In addition, Suffolk County has two Native American reservations: Poospatuck Reservation and Shinnecock Reservation. The towns in both counties have their own governments as well, with town supervisors and town councils. Towns provide or arrange most municipal services for residents of hamlets and selected services for residents of villages. Villages usually exist within a single town, but may overlap multiple towns. Villages provide services residents come into close contact with, such as garbage collection, street and highway maintenance, street lighting, and building codes, and some provide their own police force. Each county, city, town, and village has a legislative body.

In addition to the many layers of municipal government, Nassau and Suffolk counties are home to 125 distinct public school districts containing a total of 656 public schools.⁴³ This intense fragmentation mirrors, and helps to perpetuate, the racial segregation and income disparities seen across the region as the strongest schools are in mostly White, affluent communities. For instance, while only 8 percent of all Long Island students attend high-need school districts, characterized by low performance and inadequate resources, 91 percent of all students in high-need districts are Black or Latino.⁴⁴

A multigenerational struggle: Delores and Madeline Quintyne

Delores Quintyne moved from the South to New York, where she met her husband, Irwin Quintyne, a World War II veteran. The two moved to Long Island together in search of a nice suburban life, but she soon learned that the problems she thought she left in the South were present in New York as well. “We came to Long Island and discovered that there were certain pockets that African Americans still could not move into out here in Amityville.” Together, the Quintynes became involved in civic groups, and as their activism grew, they were seen demonstrating for better conditions for workers, fair housing, and equal education. “I was on many picket lines for education,” Mrs. Quintyne recalled. “I’m a rebel for education because kids are not getting the education they should be getting.” The couple became deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement, even marching with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Washington. As the reputation of the Quintynes grew, young men would often call their house in the middle of the night seeking help after brushes with the law. Mr. Quintyne also received threats on his life by people unhappy with their work.

Last year, in honor of Mr. Quintyne’s life and service—as Suffolk County human rights commissioner, deputy director of the Long Island Affirmative Action Program, and cofounder of the Suffolk chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), among other positions—the North Amityville annex was renamed the Irwin S. Quintyne Building. Today, one of the seven children of the Quintynes, Madeline, has an office in that very building. Ms. Quintyne is the town’s human services commissioner, and learned from an early age from her parents’ example. “My life is committed to making sure that everybody gets a chance and somebody will listen to them,” she explained. “Every time I run into someone, they say my daughter helped them. I say ‘Good!’” Mrs. Quintyne declared. Of the families continued work and activism, Ms. Quintyne simply explained, “We’re not stopping.”

Land Zoned for Apartments Is Scarce

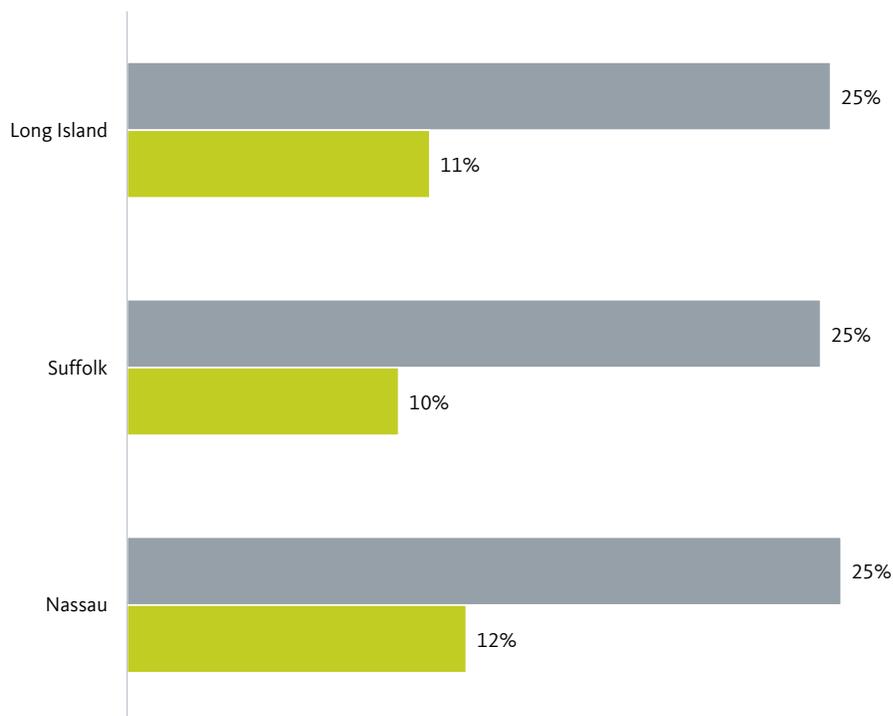
Zoning falls under the jurisdiction of 69 different governments in Nassau County alone, making it challenging to even understand where apartment construction is allowed, let alone create a regional housing strategy.⁴⁵ This is particularly troubling given the fact that the most optimistic projections of housing production to 2030 show that the region will fall short by 94,000 units based on population growth.⁴⁶ Some residents have stated affordable housing belongs next to railroad tracks rather than on the waterfront, which is an amenity that should be earned.⁴⁷ While more extreme, such “Not in my back yard” sentiments (or NIMBYism) is often a reaction to increasing neighborhood

diversity. According to *Newsday*, more than 150 properties given to towns and villages by Suffolk County for affordable housing remain vacant, with nearly 100 of them empty for more than seven years.⁴⁸ As a result of these barriers, Long Island has fewer rentals than other suburban areas in the state, and much higher rents. As a result, low-wage workers have a particularly hard time finding affordable housing (see chart below). On top of this, a number of discriminatory practices continue to prevent Black Long Islanders from moving into predominantly White communities. In fact, a federal appeals court found in April 2016 that Garden City, where 1.2 percent of the residents were Black in 2010, had violated federal antidiscrimination law by rezoning land specifically to block multifamily housing, which could potentially attract people of color.⁴⁹

Low-wage workers have limited housing options

Share of Affordable Rental Housing Units by County, 2014

- Share of jobs that are low-wage
- Share of rental housing units that are affordable



Source: Housing data from the U.S. Census Bureau and jobs data from the 2012 Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics.
Note: Housing data represent a 2010 through 2014 average.

Advancing Equitable Growth on Long Island: Policy and Strategy Priorities

Regions are equitable when all residents—regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or neighborhood—can fully participate in the region’s economic vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to its assets and resources. Such regions provide high-quality jobs to their residents and produce new ideas, products, services, and economic activity so the region remains sustainable and competitive. Equity is not only a moral imperative, but makes good business sense. As mentioned earlier, in 2014 alone, Long Island’s economy could have been nearly \$24 billion stronger if racial gaps in income had been closed. The future of Long Island depends on its ability to overcome its inequitable legacy, and ensure that every resident has a fair shot at reaching his or her full potential. The following recommendations outline policies and strategies for building on the wisdom and power of Long Island’s residents, strengthening the cradle-to-career pipeline for Black Long Islanders, and ensuring all communities are conducive to the success of their residents.

I. Build community power and voice to advance racial and economic inclusion

Government and nonprofit leaders should foster civic participation and leadership.

As the region continues to diversify, leaders across sectors must draw on the experiences and wisdom of residents and proactively take steps to ensure communities of color can participate in decision making and leadership. This starts by eliminating barriers to participation, such as taking into consideration factors like the accessibility of community meetings for people with disabilities, what transportation needs exist, and the need to provide childcare. In addition, nonprofit leaders should foster civic engagement through get-out-the-vote campaigns and leadership development programs, including youth-focused efforts. These programs will help develop civic leaders who can help organize in their communities and serve on local decision-making bodies, such as boards and commissions.

Nonprofit organizations should coordinate issue and awareness-building campaigns to advance equity.

For the region to make meaningful progress in areas of critical importance to Black Long Islanders—such as education, housing, and health—leaders championing equitable policies must work together across neighborhoods to advance equitable strategies. A number of leaders on Long Island are already working tirelessly on strategies to influence government officials at the village, town, and county levels and are interested in collaborating with like-minded institutions around specific actions and policies. It is critical for nonprofit leaders to build the infrastructure for information-sharing and collective action, and to demonstrate how supporting efforts to help Black Long Islanders will yield results for all groups. Local and national philanthropic organizations should support the community-based organizations in Black neighborhoods as they play a vital role in building community cohesion and painting a vision for the community’s future. Funders should provide resources for coalition staff to ensure that there is a true coordinated effort, and should drive more resources toward development and implementation of solutions to regional stressors. This will also help identify key policies for government leaders to reform in the areas of housing, regional planning, zoning, and infrastructure investments.

Best Practice: The power of collective action in the Twin Cities

In 2007, the first plans for the region’s Green Line—a \$1 billion light-rail line connecting the downtowns of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota—were shared with the public. However, the train was slated to bypass three of the lowest-income, most diverse neighborhoods. To gain access, a grassroots coalition of more than 20 organizations launched the “Stops for Us” coalition, fighting for three more stations. Over the course of four years, coalition members organized marches, participated in public meetings and committees, and submitted public comments, and were ultimately successful. The campaign brought together Black community members and Asian immigrant communities, creating a multiracial, multiethnic coalition around equitable outcomes.

Government leaders must make a commitment to racial inclusion and equitable growth.

Currently, both counties and some towns have anti-bias task forces to address prejudice and discrimination in their jurisdictions, but past experience has shown that these bodies are limited in scope and have not worked to advance equity across government offices. These task forces should work with outside groups to develop racial equity principles that all departments and agencies can use to understand the potential equity impacts of decision making on marginalized populations, as well as how to advance equity and inclusion. For example, in 2004, the City of Seattle, Washington, created the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) to end institutionalized racism and disparities in city government. The initiative trains city employees on ending institutional racism, and created a toolkit for departments to “conduct comprehensive reviews of their programs, policies and budgets, resulting in hundreds of changes to increase racial equity” and the toolkit prompts government workers to consider desired outcomes, key stakeholders, and benefits and burdens.⁵⁰ Annual reporting to the public on how the principles informed decision making will increase transparency and ensure accountability.

To support the building of healthy neighborhoods of opportunity, agencies also need to collaborate and share information with each other about how decisions can best contribute to neighborhood goals. This would lay the groundwork for important long-term efforts to ensure government is more responsive to the public, such as creating councilmanic districts throughout government bodies, pushing for regional equitable development plans, and ensuring increased police accountability. Funders should identify and drive resources to efforts that could replicate what Seattle did on Long Island.

In addition to ensuring that government is focused on equity, semi-public economic development entities and regional civic organizations should embed equity into their work. This includes analyzing population-level data disaggregated by race and place to understand vulnerabilities and opportunities to develop targeted strategies.

II. Cultivate homegrown talent through a strong cradle-to-career pipeline

Integrate and consolidate school districts.

The legacy of segregation, coupled with schools being primarily funded through local property taxes, will always put Black students at a disadvantage unless something is changed. While school consolidation is politically unpopular, it would improve the educational experience of all students, is a more sustainable model, and is critical to the region’s future workforce. Given how resistant many parents are to consolidation, an important opportunity is to engage students and teachers in information campaigns about the disparities across schools, and the educational benefits all students receive from an integrated learning environment.

Funders should direct resources to examining the feasibility and municipal benefits—including fiscal and educational—of school consolidation, as well as which specific districts should explore consolidation to advance better results for low- and moderate-income populations on Long Island. While government leaders would have to take the lead on implementation, a funder-backed study could bring together stakeholders to understand how to ensure quality for existing high-performing schools, while lifting low-performing schools.

Foster financial empowerment throughout the cradle-to-career pipeline.

Over the last several years, Promise Neighborhood sites—launched under the Obama Administration—have not only supported academic achievement in schools, but have provided access to financial education services through school curricula, community centers, after-school programs, and events for parents. These efforts offer a model for integrating financial education programs into plans for high-quality education to put students on the road to prosperity from the start. Such a model could include universal preschool paired with a two-generation approach to financial education; connecting parents with financial education, counseling, and asset-building products through their children’s schools; and supporting the establishment of savings accounts for all children. For example, in San Antonio, Texas, the Eastside Promise Neighborhood launched a pilot program to provide financial counseling to parents who enroll their children in the institution’s no- to low-cost childcare program. School leaders should work with community-based organizations and business leaders on developing a financial literacy curriculum to integrate throughout the cradle-to-career pipeline. In addition, children’s savings accounts have been increasingly adopted to increase financial security impacts.

According to the Center for Social Development, when a child has a savings account in their name, parents become more engaged in savings and financial management, and view college education as a more tangible goal for their child. For the child, having a savings account makes it easier to set goals for college and increases the odds that children will graduate from high school.⁵¹ County leaders could initiate programs that provide every child with a savings account and help boost savings for lower-income children.

Best Practice: Fostering financial empowerment through cradle-to-career supports

The Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood operates the Families Save program to address the intergenerational cycle of poverty, and help students and parents build financial capacity. Families Save is based in 19 schools and dozens of community centers throughout the Promise area and provides both curriculum-based and community-based financial education. Middle school and high school students acquire first-hand personal finance experience by engaging in real-life purchasing choices like buying a car or applying for a credit card. Families receive coaching on banking, budgeting, and college financial aid options, and they can access matching monetary incentives to support their savings goals. These and similar strategies ensure that students and families develop a strong financial capability foundation to help them overcome multiple barriers to financial security. Replicating these community- and school-based approaches throughout Los Angeles would build an entire generation of students (and families) who are better equipped to contribute to economic life and prosper. Student summer employment is another way for youth to build a foundation for financial security. In San Francisco, MyPath works with low-income teens already participating in the Mayor's Youth Employment and Education Program. MyPath provides participating youth with peer-to-peer coaching on savings skills and helps them access mainstream financial products, including savings accounts that allow for direct payroll deposits. In 2012–2013, youth participating in the program saved an average of \$1,210. Using the existing platform of a local government-funded summer employment experience represents a powerful and efficient approach to building skills for future financial security among low-income teens.

Leaders across sectors should ensure career pathways exist for all youth.

As stated earlier, young people on Long Island are increasingly disconnected, particularly young Black Long Islanders. Leaders across sectors should work to better understand the barriers this population faces, and identify clear results for this population, such as the number of Black disconnected youth who will be directed toward further education or employment opportunities. In addition, these leaders should select clear indicators that will help track progress toward these results, and keep all stakeholders accountable, such as the number of disconnected youth enrolled in training programs. This will help community leaders to work more strategically and to better advocate for public, private, and philanthropic leaders to better align their resources.

Such a strategy would be helpful for county workforce development leaders and business leaders, who must develop a coordinated strategy for targeting disconnected youth and other workers facing barriers to employment. An effective strategy for preparing young people for the next economy, which could be informed by this collective impact strategy, is youth summer job programs. Such programs last between five and seven weeks and provide work experience to teens and young adults who might face barriers to entering the workforce—these programs can enhance youths' exposure to career paths and also increase incomes.⁵²

Best Practice: Fostering youth employment in Louisville, Kentucky

In 2011, Mayor Greg Fischer of Louisville, Kentucky, launched SummerWorks to help connect young people with summer jobs, work-based learning opportunities, a paycheck, and mentorship to help put them on a path toward greater opportunities. In 2014, the U.S. Conference of Mayors recognized SummerWorks as one of the nation's best summer job programs for young people. This past year, a combination of public and private funding created positions at dozens of nonprofit organizations and city agencies, and "employer champions" hired youth for jobs in a variety of sectors, including hospitals, restaurants, banks, and hotels. The program lays out performance expectations in areas such as attendance, communication, and accepting direction. Supervisors assess participants at the beginning and end of the summer. Students subsequently debrief on the evaluation with their supervisor and/or job coach. Last year, 5,111 total youth were employed at SummerWorks champion employers. In addition, 78 percent of participants want to participate again in 2017, and 98 percent of 2016 employers intend to participate again.

Build financial security through social services and workforce development programs.

While building financial security is a long-term process, interventions to financially empower families and individuals can occur at key milestones in a person's life, such as starting a new job, having a baby, or paying taxes. In addition, financial literacy training and the provision of related products is most effective when these services are embedded in trusted community institutions, which help clients overcome barriers to entering the economic mainstream, improve stability, and increase financial well-being.⁵³ For example, in New York City, a pilot project paired access to a basic checking account with minimal financial counseling for adults transitioning off of receiving public benefits. All 1,034 participants were offered bank accounts, with half being offered free one-on-one financial counseling through the city's Financial Empowerment Centers. According to an evaluation of the program, participants who received counseling were more likely to stay current on debt payments, demonstrating the efficacy of financial interventions through existing social programs.⁵⁴ This is an important model for county leaders to consider to ensure families and individuals achieve greater financial security as well as help prevent families from falling victim to high-cost predatory lenders.

Leaders across sectors should establish an anchor strategy around career pathways.

Long Island is fortunate to be home to a number of colleges, universities, and hospitals—also known as anchor institutions—that can be leveraged for their economic and community power. Anchors take on many roles from real estate developer to employer to purchaser of goods and services. Having an anchor strategy developed by government officials and anchor leaders can enable communities to benefit from these institutions.⁵⁵ Leaders on Long Island are already demonstrating the impact anchor institutions can have on communities of color. Under the leadership of Dr. Shaun McKay, the Suffolk Community College has run an early Intervention program for students at Hampton Bays High School who are in need of assistance. Almost 40 percent of the students from Hampton Bays attend Suffolk Community College, but many are not college ready. Four years ago, 68 percent of Hampton Bays' students enrolled in the college were taking at least one developmental class, which can inhibit on-time graduation and advancement toward a career path. Through the early intervention program, the college works with the high school principal and guidance counselors to identify students who might be at risk of developmental placement, and jointly develop a plan to help remediate these students while they are seniors. In a huge shift, just 25 percent of Hampton Bays' graduates were in developmental classes at the college in 2016.⁵⁶ As Suffolk Community College expands

its efforts into other high schools, public and private entities should fund these efforts as well as pilot programs through other community colleges.

County leaders should convene a regional table of stakeholders, including anchors, business leaders, philanthropy, and public agencies to develop an anchor strategy for economic inclusion. Community-based organizations should also be at the table to help design and implement strategies that build on their strengths and address the unique barriers residents face.⁵⁷ Such a strategy should include community benefits, such as technical assistance to help build the capacity of small businesses to contract with anchors, as well as local and targeted hiring strategies. Philanthropic leaders can support the regional table and development of the plan, as well as align funding to support technical assistance; this assistance can support small businesses partnering with anchors and support anchors in an analysis of their supply chains to determine opportunities to change procurement practices to better benefit local businesses and the community.

Best Practice: Harnessing the power of anchor institutions

In the Boston metro area, Partners HealthCare, a nonprofit consortium of hospitals, established a workforce development program that targets low-income residents for four-week training and classroom programs that include introduction to the health-care environment, résumé preparation, interviewing skills, job-placement assistance, and financial literacy. Participants earn positions such as front-desk receptionists, clerical assistants, registration coordinators, operating-room assistants, and laboratory aides. To date, thousands of Partners HealthCare employees have participated in skill-development opportunities, and more than 425 community residents have graduated from the health-care training and education program in the past 10 years, with 86 percent having been placed in careers within the Partners HealthCare system.

In addition, given the number of goods and services anchor institutions purchase, anchors can develop procurement strategies that use more local- and Black-owned businesses. However, local businesses often lack the capacity to handle major contracts, so innovative anchor institutions are developing mentorship programs to help prepare small local businesses for contracting opportunities. For example, the University of Pennsylvania has helped prepare small companies to serve as its contractors. Telrose Corp., a local and minority-owned office-supplies company, was a three-person delivery company and

subcontractor to Office Depot. The University of Pennsylvania persuaded Office Depot to help prepare Telrose to become the university's prime contractor. Over 10 years, Telrose increased its share of the contract with the university from \$300,000 to \$50 million.

III. Create sustainable neighborhoods for all

Develop inclusive planning criteria for high-need villages and hamlets.

The largest barrier to opportunity for Black residents on Long Island is the segregation that endures through narrow housing policy. To overcome housing segregation, while increasing the supply of affordable housing, public and nonprofit leaders must simultaneously work to increase affordable housing in more affluent areas and revitalize Black communities. This will require changes to zoning laws, community-based planning, and advocacy strategies. A great model for this work already exists on Long Island. In 2003, Sustainable Long Island facilitated a community-based planning event called “Wyandanch Rising,” which brought together hundreds of homeowners, renters, business and property owners, civic groups, and government officials around a vision for development that embedded community benefits into market development.⁵⁸ Community-based organizations must work to replicate “Wyandanch Rising” as a model of how grassroots, collaborative, inclusive planning can be applied throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties.

In addition, simple policy shifts can ensure more affordable housing options to all residents of Long Island. According to an analysis by HR&A Advisors and the Regional Planning Association of the Village of Valley Stream, the Village of Babylon, and the Hamlet of Hicksville, minimal zoning changes in these communities help increase affordable housing, have the potential to improve project affordability, and help create downtown areas attractive to young people.⁵⁹ For example, in Hicksville, simply rezoning a half-acre site for multifamily housing could yield 1,315 total units. In Valley Stream, establishing a minimum unit size of 850 square feet, increasing maximum lot coverage to 60 percent, and increasing maximum building height from three to four stories would yield 495 additional units.⁶⁰ Funders can also work with affordable housing developers on creating housing funds to support the development of accessible housing in this market.

It is also critical to target transportation and infrastructure resources to affordable housing efforts, to ensure that low-income communities and communities of color who rely on public transportation have increased access, but also to ensure that transit development does not increase the cost of living. Funders have taken an important role across the country in supporting transit-oriented development efforts by providing planning support and subsidies, and could help replicate such work on Long Island. Building equity into Long Island's transportation system goes beyond addressing gaps in the LIRR and bus system, and is more about creating transportation systems that connect people to opportunity, such as jobs and vital community services.

Leverage anchor institutions in housing development and placemaking.

As mentioned above, Long Island is home to a number of world-class anchor institutions that have the potential to play an even greater role in the surrounding communities. In particular, Long Island's anchors have the power to partner with funders to increase assets for workers through faculty home loans and renters allowances to live in close proximity to the campus, and by promoting mixed-income communities in the process. This model was successfully launched in 2011 in Detroit when the Live Midtown program partnered with Henry Ford Health System, Wayne State University, and Detroit Medical Center to incentivize employees to live in the revitalizing neighborhood. Incentives included a \$20,000 down payment toward buying a home, \$5,000 for home-improvement projects, \$1,000 for renters who renewed existing leases, and \$2,500 for new renters their first year in the neighborhood and an additional \$1,000 for the second year.⁶¹ The goal of the program was to increase neighborhood density, vitality, safety, and economy as people tend to spend time and money where they live. In addition, employers benefit as employees tend to be more productive when they live close to where they work.⁶² Through matching dollars from foundations, the Live Midtown program was able to spend nearly \$3 million in direct subsidies in three years, helping nearly 1,500 workers to rent apartments or buy condos in the central part of the city.⁶³ Such a program would be an important component in any anchor strategy and illustrates how anchors and philanthropy can partner to spur economic activity.

New York State should ensure that funding for affordable housing integrates rather than segregates communities.

One way to expand affordable housing is through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). The LIHTC program is a subsidy used to finance the development of affordable rental housing by subsidizing the cost of the developer, providing critical financing for reduced rents.⁶⁴ While this has the potential to desegregate Long Island, there are little to no requirements for where properties receiving LIHTC should be built. Historical subsidized housing has led to a concentration of affordable housing in predominately low-income communities of color, which perpetuates racial and economic segregation.⁶⁵ Given the fact that states have the power to set requirements, ERASE Racism has led a campaign calling on New York State Homes and Community Renewal, which sets the scoring criteria and preferences for the LIHTC program, to create a scoring system that encourages integration and creates opportunities for low-income residents and residents of color.⁶⁶ Funders can support further efforts for community leaders to campaign for expanding affordable housing opportunities on Long Island.

Hospitals should work with public and nonprofit leaders to inform the provision of community benefits.

A number of environmental hazards, including superfund sites, power plants, and gravel mines are located in or in close proximity to communities of color—these hazards contribute to the health disparities Black Long Islanders experience. Not only are these issues harmful to resident health, but even when such sites are held accountable through fines, the communities impacted the most fail to reap any benefits. Given the fact that nonprofit hospitals are required to provide benefits in exchange for tax-exempt status, public and nonprofit leaders have an opportunity to work with hospitals to think more comprehensively about health, and identify the best solutions for residents. To fulfill their missions and their public obligations, these hospitals should consider how to better deliver health and wellness services focused on how residents live, such as enhancing access to health services and promoting healthy choices, such as investments in green space. One tactic hospitals can invest in is establishing a program of community health workers to reach residents where they live. Funders can align efforts around these programs and connect health workers with existing community-based organizations.

Conclusion

As Long Island makes advances in health, energy, and technology, the region will be ready to lead the next economy only when it addresses the enduring effects of the old one. While many barriers to change exist, leaders across sectors are already taking steps to advance racial inclusion and equitable growth but need help reaching the necessary scale to tackle inequities. By empowering communities, cultivating homegrown talent, and strengthening governments' roles in collaborating across the region, Long Island's leaders will bolster the region's competitiveness and help all Long Islanders see greater economic inclusion and sustained benefits. Long Island is ready to grapple with these issues, overcome its history, and make the American dream that fueled its early growth a reality for all Long Islanders.

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