

DAY 7: Opportunity in Michigan

In Michigan alone, over 1.6 million working households – or 43 percent of households – are struggling to afford basic necessities like housing, child care, food, transportation, and technology, according to the [2019 ALICE Report](#) by the Michigan Association of United Ways. These households, also known as ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to cover the basic cost of living, called the ALICE threshold, in their counties. This means that a parent within an ALICE household may have to make trade-offs between necessities like rent or stocking the refrigerator or going without healthcare as a parent to ensure that a child has access to preschool.

However, when you disaggregate the data, they tell a more disturbing story. Sixty three percent (63%) of Black households are struggling to afford basic necessities, which is almost double that of White households-just 36 percent.

During the recovery from the Great Recession, the number of Black households under the ALICE Threshold in Michigan increased by 11% from 2010 to 2018, while the number of White households below the threshold increased by only 1%. And since COVID-19, in households below the ALICE threshold is even greater. This means that a very large percentage of parents, especially Black parents have to make trade-offs between necessities like rent or stocking the refrigerator or going without healthcare as a parent to ensure that a child has access to preschool.

We know that where you live and where children are raised can have a strong influence on opportunity. We also know that when these factors are combined with race, people of color are disproportionately impacted. Over the next few days, we will be exploring how ALICE, race, and other factors impact a person's housing, health, education, financial stability, and more.

Today's Challenge

Option 1: Check out the [ALICE Report for the State of Michigan](#) (based on 2017 data) and dig down further into your county.

Option 2: See this [NY Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on boys.

Option 3: Read about [Raj Chetty](#), a Harvard economist committed to showing how zip code shapes opportunity. Dive into his research through the [Equality of Opportunity Project](#).

Option 4: Journal about how the data and stories in today's challenge compares with the commonly told story that the United States is a land of opportunity.

DAY 8: Segregation in Michigan

Institutional Racism is defined as “the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.” -- [Solid Ground](#)

When you hear the word segregation, what do you think of? Many of us think back to the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, American cities continue to be highly segregated. Using U.S. Census Bureau data, [Governing Magazine](#) found Detroit ranks as the fourth-most segregated metro area in the nation, and Michigan cities such as Grand Rapids and Lansing also have a high rate of segregation in housing. In 2015 Washtenaw County was ranked the [eighth most economically segregated](#) metro area in the United States. Washtenaw County also ranked in the [bottom 8% for upward mobility](#) for children whose parents fall into the bottom 25 percent of earners nationwide.

Present-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and others. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions that keep it in place. Policies shaped by institutional racism that enforce segregation include redlining, predatory lending, the exclusion of veterans from the G.I. bill, and the forced segregation of neighborhoods by the Federal Housing Authority. As a result of institutional racism, racial stratification and inequities persist in employment, housing, education, healthcare, government and other sectors. ([Source](#))

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Explore the [Racial Dot Map](#) created by the University of Virginia, which uses colored dots to visualize how racial segregation appears in our communities. We encourage you to zoom into Michigan and your County to see how it plays out in our backyard. Read more about the methodology [here](#).

Option 2: Why are cities still so segregated? Watch this quick video where [NPR's Code Switch](#) looks at the factors contributing to modern day segregation.

Option 3: Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, our nation is still divided. Read more from [The Economist](#) about how segregation exists today in cities across America and the costly impact it has on the future of our communities.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#), [#miuwequitychallenge](#), [#uwwcequity](#) and tag [@uwwashtenaw](#).