Blueprint to Dismantle Systemic Racism:
Wake County, North Carolina
An initiative of A Better Wake

February 2022

Photo Credit: Peter Pencil, Getty Images

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Executive Summary

To reimagine systems that create inequitable outcomes for Black and Brown residents, the Triangle Diversity, Equity, & InclusivityAlliance (the DEI Alliance) and its partners built on the longstanding work in the community to create a Blueprint to dismantle systemic racism in Wake County, North Carolina. The Blueprint is a living document comprising more than 40 goals and 150 near-term action items that organizations can take to address systemic racism. It was created by a group of more than 50 leaders from community-based organizations who met as working groups from June through December 2021. Working groups drafted goals and ideas to transform Wake County into a place where Black and Brown residents experience equity in every aspect of their lives.

The Blueprint targets four areas: criminal justice, economic mobility, education equity, and health equity. These focus areas were identified from recent state and local research and were selected to leverage this effort. Three additional parameters served as guideposts for shaping the Blueprint: systems change, local orientation, and potential for near-term action.

Exhibit ES-1 summarizes the working groups' vision and goals for the four focus areas. The purpose of sharing these results is to lead action and encourage local organizations to adopt relevant ideas and actions into their strategic plans, policy development, and daily work practices to seed widespread and longstanding change in Wake County.

Photo Credit: Peyton Sickles

The Blueprint is designed to evolve over time through an ongoing and collaborative process involving an array of organizations and is co-led by the Raleigh Chamber, the DEI Alliance, Wake County Government, and the Raleigh-Apex NAACP. A corresponding data dashboard uses available data to track progress and spur additional conversations for change. To find out more, please visit the Blueprint website: https://abetterwake.com/blueprint.

Exhibit ES-1. **Summary of Focus Area Visions and Goals**

Criminal Justice	**Vision: A Wake County where Black and Brown residents do not have disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system, and all its institutions and organizations are coordinated to serve and support citizens equitably.** Action: The Criminal Justice working group developed targeted goals at several points on the continuum of the criminal justice system to pursue change that can impact Black and Brown residents from elementary school to adulthood. The long-term anticipated results of these efforts are a reduced criminal justice presence in Wake County, accurate and accessible data about the criminal justice system, and increased trust between Black and Brown residents and local law enforcement and court representatives.
Economic Mobility	**Vision: A Wake County where Black and Brown residents are free to choose and pursue their desired path of economic mobility and prosperity without hindrance.** Action: The Economic Mobility working group developed goals to support each aspect of Black and Brown residents' path toward greater economic opportunity and stability. The goals range from affordable housing rental and ownership options to workforce skills development and employment, to small business contracting opportunities for business owners of color, and personal financial well-being. The intended result is a strengthened economic mobility ecosystem in which residents of color can define and achieve their personal vision of prosperity.
Educational Equity	**Vision: A Wake County with an equitable education system in which Black and Brown children have unfettered access to the experiences and environments that enable them to become their full and best selves without systemic barriers.** Action: The Education Equity working group set goals to comprehensively support Black and Brown students and make schools into safe and supportive learning environments. Examples of goals include strengthening the cultural competency of educators; improving mental health services for students of color, teachers, and administrators; addressing the current pipeline from disciplinary actions in schools to prison; and increasing the voice and power of families within the school system. The long-term impacts of these goals are increased capacity within school administrators and teachers about youth development and racial equity, a reduction in disciplinary actions, and an elimination of the overrepresentation of Black and Brown students receiving disciplinary actions.
Health Equity	**Vision: A Wake County with a healthcare system in which Black and Brown residents can attain their highest level of health and well-being.** Action: The Health Equity working group developed goals to increase healthcare access for Black and Brown residents, improve data to represent people of color accurately within the broader healthcare system, and strengthen data as a tool for greater accountability about healthcare accessibility in Wake County. The desired result of this work is healthy Black and Brown residents who have access to the healthcare they need to thrive.

Introduction and Purpose

The Triangle Diversity, Equity, & Inclusivity Alliance (the DEI Alliance)[1] and its partners recognize that, although many in the region enjoy a high quality of life, those who have been historically underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized face a different reality that is rooted in systemic racism. It has permeated the justice system; created education, health, and wealth disparities; and resulted in discriminatory practices. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice movements recently revealed these deep inequities in our society and economy across the United States, North Carolina, and locally in Wake County. These inequities demand attention, problem solving, and action.

To address these inequalities, the DEI Alliance and its partners built on longstanding efforts in the community to create a Blueprint for how local government, education, private sector, faith-based, and nonprofit organizations can actively work in tandem to dismantle systemic racism in Wake County. The Blueprint's central focus is on near-term actions that can lead to changing the current reality of Black and Brown residents* who are disproportionately experiencing negative impacts across the county. To assist with data analysis, facilitation, and idea development for the Blueprint, the DEI Alliance worked with RTI International and a cross-sectoral group of local leaders to

➔ conduct a rapid data assessment to best understand current racial disparities in Wake County;

➔ compile actionable steps, determined by community representatives, that build from and add to the racial equity work happening in Wake County to address systemic racism; and

➔ establish a data dashboard to track progress toward greater equity for Black and Brown residents in Wake County.

With these initial efforts complete in January 2022, the DEI Alliance and its partners associated with this work will continue to forge a path toward reimagining systems in Wake County through collective action that tackles criminal justice, economic, education, and health systems change at the local level. The Blueprint process is designed to evolve over time in an ongoing and collaborative manner to implement near-term action items and to revisit goals, focus areas, and next steps to respond best to emerging priorities. Thus, the Blueprint is the beginning of a long-term effort to create lasting change. The Blueprint is intended for local leaders and stakeholders from government, business, nonprofit, faith-based and education sectors, in addition to community members in Wake County. The Blueprint is designed to spur Wake County organizations to incorporate its ideas and goals into their strategic plans, policies, practices, and operations. With the Blueprint, community members can lead or support ideas for change that resonate with the needs and desires in their neighborhoods. The DEI Alliance and its partners ask that readers consider ways they can build on these ideas to enact change in their organizations and communities and engage in this process moving forward.

> A Blueprint for how local government, education, private sector, faith-based, and nonprofit organizations can actively work in tandem to dismantle systemic racism in Wake County.

*"Black and Brown residents" or "people of color" who live in Wake County refers to individuals who identify racially or ethnically as Black, Asian, multiracial, Native American or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino. These racial and ethnic categories are based on U.S. Census Bureau terms and definitions.

1 The DEI Alliance is a collaborative of private and public entities in Wake County, leading the effort to make the Triangle region the most diverse, equitable, and inclusive business environment in the country. The DEI Alliance is the lead of the Blueprint development and implementation. For more information, see: http://www.triangledei.org.

Approach

The Blueprint is designed for local leaders and community residents to identify, champion, and enact systems-level change in Wake County that can dismantle systemic racism. To do this, Blueprint partners established parameters to guide the work, designed a research and engagement process, identified initial organizations to participate in the effort, and set a timeline for its completion. Each of these components is detailed below.

Blueprint Focus

The Blueprint builds on longstanding community work to document action items that local organizations and institutions can concentrate on in the near term. Three important parameters shaped the Blueprint focus: a systems focus, local orientation, and potential for immediate action (**Exhibit 1**).

Exhibit 1. Blueprint Parameters

Systems Focus: Will the actions help reimagine systems change to end racial disparities? The Blueprint focuses on institutional and cross-sectoral policies and practices, not on individual behavior change. The DEI Alliance and its partners view changes in personal implicit racial bias, perceptions, and opinions based in conscious or unconscious racist beliefs as important to long-term and equitable progress. The Blueprint, however, is centered on systems to inform countywide transformations in how policies are developed, resources are invested, and decisions are made to reduce the aggregated bias that disproportionately and negatively affects Black and Brown residents today.	**Local Orientation:** Can local organizations and institutions carry out these actions? The Blueprint is centered on collective and local activities, not on state or federal systems change. The Blueprint is centered locally but also recognizes the need to influence and advocate for change on the state and federal levels.	**Immediately Actionable:** Can the goals be acted upon in the next 3 to 12 months? The Blueprint focuses on immediate action and not on ideas that are theoretical or lack local capacity or agency to enact.

The DEI Alliance and its partners recognize that many people from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences face circumstances that make it difficult to access and participate equitably and effectively in programs that improve livelihoods and well-being across the county. Because Black and Brown residents face disproportionate negative outcomes compared with the rest of the population in Wake County, this Blueprint focuses explicitly on Black and Brown residents, or people of color in Wake County. Specifically, this includes residents who identify within the following racial and ethnic categories: Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, multiracial, and Native American/Pacific Islander (see Summary Data Assessment and Appendix A for more detail on these populations in Wake County).

To focus the Blueprint parameters further, the DEI Alliance and its partners built on a recent community-based initiative led by A Better Wake. A Better Wake was started by a collection of leaders from a diverse cross-section of organizations seeking to dismantle systems that negatively impact Black and Brown residents. From this initiative, the DEI Alliance and partners identified four topic areas important for Wake County to address: criminal justice, economic mobility, education equity, and health equity (**Exhibit 2**).

For this immediate effort, these four areas provided an excellent foundation to organize ideas and galvanize action. As the Blueprint evolves over time, new focus areas can be introduced and resources devoted to existing focus areas can be reduced/reallocated as progress is made in those areas.

Exhibit 2. Four Topics of Focus for the Blueprint

| CRIMINAL JUSTICE | ECONOMIC MOBILITY |
| EDUCATION EQUITY | HEALTH EQUITY |

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Blueprint Process and Organizations Involved

Blueprint development was led by the DEI Alliance and was facilitated by RTI International, an independent research institute (**Exhibit 3**). In addition, several local partners made this work possible through financial funding, including Wake County Government, Duke Energy, the City of Raleigh, the Raleigh Chamber, and the DEI Alliance.

Exhibit 3. Lead Collaborators on Blueprint Development

The Triangle DEI Alliance (http://www.triangledei.org) is a collaborative of private and public entities in Wake County, leading the effort to make the Triangle region the most diverse, equitable, and inclusive business environment in the country. The DEI Alliance is the lead of the Blueprint development and implementation.

RTI International (https://www.rti.org) is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. Headquartered in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, RTI is the facilitator and data partner for Blueprint development.

The Blueprint's content was created by community working groups consisting of more than 50 people representing organizations positioned to enact change in the four focus areas: criminal justice, economic mobility, education equity, and health equity. These groups met multiple times over the summer and fall of 2021 to establish a vision, goals, and action items in the near term that lay the groundwork for how we can make progress toward ending systemic racism. The Blueprint is reflective of this community braintrust. Working group members are listed in Appendix B.
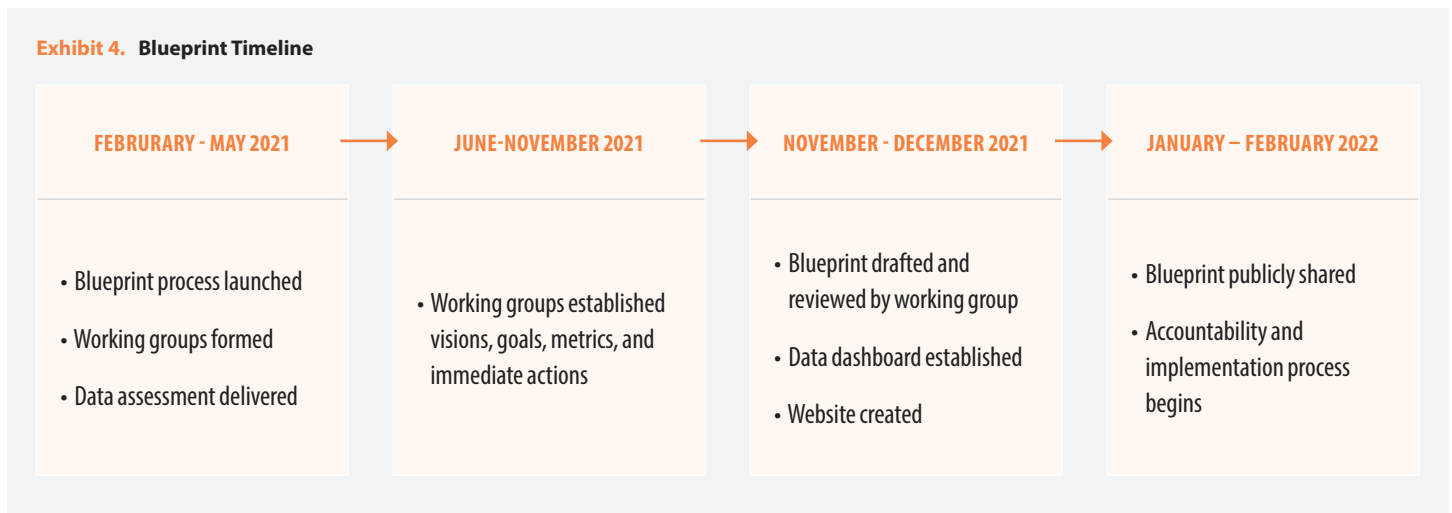
The DEI Alliance also established a group of national advisors to bring ideas and insights from other communities across the country into the Blueprint development process for Wake County. These five individuals met multiple times to share best practices, cautions, and caveats from research and practice based on their experiences. National advisors are listed in Appendix B.

Organizations Involved in Blueprint Development

Alliance Behavioral Health

Antioch Bible Fellowship Church

Ashley Gaddy Enterprises

Bank of America

Capital Area Food Network

Carolina Small Business Development Fund

City of Raleigh

Communities in Schools of Wake

Community Success Initiative

Duke Energy

Duke Raleigh Hospital

Forward Justice

McGuire Woods

Meredith College

National Institute of Minority Economic Development

NC Courts

NC Department of Public Safety, Juvenile Justice

NC Justice Center

NC State University, Economic Development Partnership

North Carolina Black Women Empowerment Network

Pillar Consulting

Poe Center

Raleigh Chamber

Regional Transportation Alliance

SBTDC at NC State University

Second Chance Alliance

Southeast Raleigh Promise

The Hunt Institute

Triangle J Council of Governments

Wake County

Wake County Cooperative Extension

Wake County, Department of Housing Affordability & Community Revitalization

Wake County Economic Development

Wake County, Office of the County Manager

Wake County Public Schools

WakeEd Partnership

Wake Health & Human Services

Wake Smart Start

Wake Technical Community College

William Peace University

Blueprint Timeline

Building on prior community conversations and efforts, the Blueprint process launched in February 2021 at the Raleigh Chamber's *Community Success Forum* and will conclude with the public release of the Blueprint in February 2022. A formal discussion of the Blueprint's findings and recommendations will be held at the Raleigh Chamber's *Community Success Forum* in February 2022. The Blueprint process began with a rapid data assessment to document how people of color in Wake County experience criminal justice, economic, education, and health outcomes compared with all residents in Wake County. Next, the DEI Alliance and RTI established the working groups and national advisors. The working groups met between June and December 2021 to determine and refine visions, goals, outcome metrics, and immediate actions to be implemented in Wake County. A detailed timeline is shown in **Exhibit 4**.

Exhibit 4. Blueprint Timeline

FEBRURARY - MAY 2021	JUNE-NOVEMBER 2021	NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2021	JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2022
• Blueprint process launched • Working groups formed • Data assessment delivered	• Working groups established visions, goals, metrics, and immediate actions	• Blueprint drafted and reviewed by working group • Data dashboard established • Website created	• Blueprint publicly shared • Accountability and implementation process begins

This approach was established to create a foundational Blueprint for dismantling systemic racism in Wake County. It is intended to be a "living document" that evolves based on changing needs and priorities in Wake County. The work of the Blueprint will advance in 2022 under the co-leadership of the DEI Alliance, the Raleigh Chamber, Wake County Government, and the Raleigh-Apex NAACP alongside a collective of organizations that comprise the working group members and other local partners. The Blueprint process will extend into 2022 using an accountability roadmap and implementation process to facilitate the collective action of local leaders. In the near term, working group members and other partners will identify ways to incorporate the goals and action items into the strategic plans and priorities of their representative organizations. This process will also include opportunities to review goals and action items over time to ensure that the Blueprint reflects the needs and opportunities for impact.

Summary Data Assessment

To provide grounding for this work, RTI conducted a rapid data assessment in May 2021 to describe how people of color experience criminal justice, economic, education, and health outcomes compared with the overall Wake County population. These findings are summarized below and detailed in Appendix A.

Wake County, North Carolina, is among the fastest growing counties in the United States. In 2019, its population reached over 1.1 million, making it the largest county in North Carolina by population. Wake County is also increasingly diverse (see **Exhibit 5**): in 2019, residents of color in Wake County made up 40.6% of the population. Of that, approximately one-half is Black (20.1%); one-fourth is Hispanic or Latino (10.4%); and one-fourth includes Asian (7.5%), multiracial, and Native American/Pacific Islander.[2] Asian and Hispanic or Latino are the fastest growing racial and ethnic groups in Wake County. In this Blueprint, we refer to these racial and ethnic groups as Black or Brown residents or people of color. This Blueprint explicitly focuses on Black and Brown residents in Wake County.

Exhibit 5. **Population, Racial, and Ethnic Demographics of Wake County, 2010 and 2019**
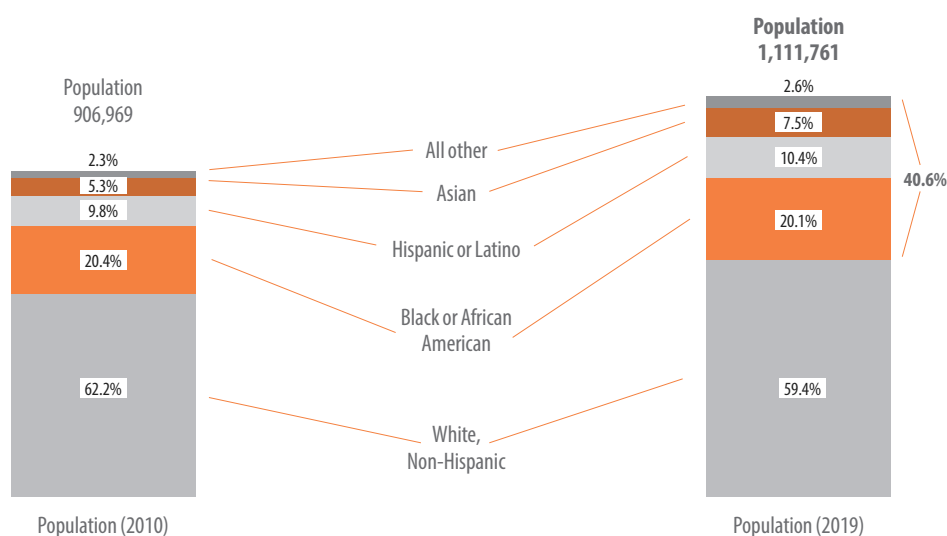
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2019 ACS 5-Year Averages.

In 2010, Black and Brown residents were primarily concentrated southeast, east, and northeast of Raleigh. By 2019, Black and Brown residents increased in areas to the northeast of Raleigh between Knightdale, Wendell, and Rolesville and into Garner and Morrisville (**Exhibit 6**). This is the effect of several trends, including

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2 Multiracial, Other, Native American, and Pacific Islander make up 2.6% of the population of Wake County. For the purposes of this report, they are included as "all other." In most cases, the sample size is too small to have accurate, detailed data at the county level for these groups based on census definitions.

displacement of low-income Black families to places like Knightdale, Wendell, and Garner because of high housing costs in Raleigh and migration of Asian and Hispanic/Latino residents and families into the county.

Exhibit 6. Racial and Ethnic Makeup in Wake County by Census Tract, 2010 and 2019
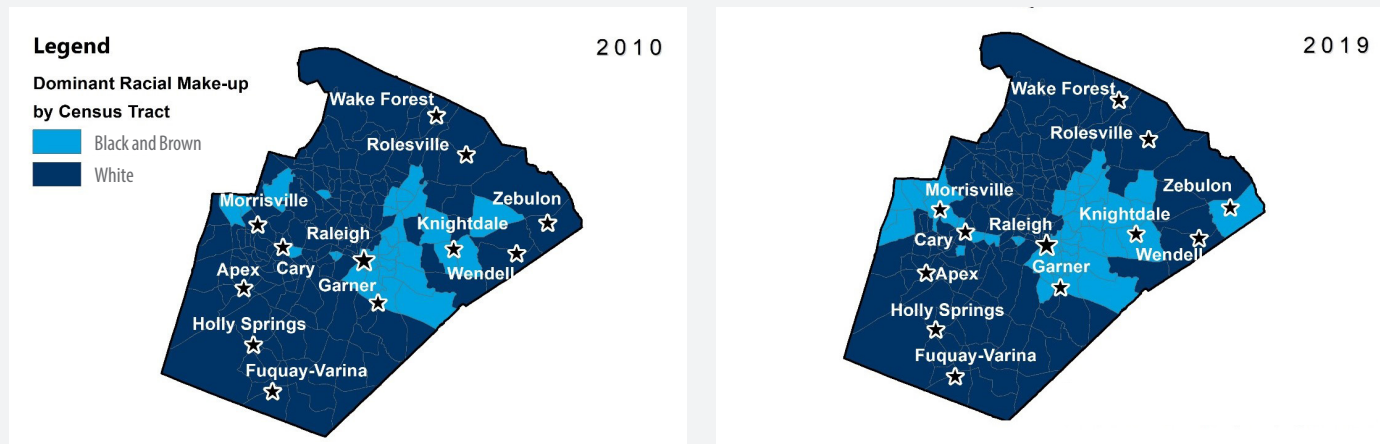
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2019 ACS 5-Year Averages.

Wake County consistently ranks among the most attractive economies in the country, but key outcomes differ substantially when analyzed by race and ethnicity. As the data show, Black, Hispanic and Latino, and other residents of color tend to have disproportionately high representation in the criminal justice system, lower household income, lower educational outcomes, lower life expectancy, and less access to healthcare compared with White residents. We summarize key data takeaways in each of the four focus areas below.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In the United States, Black people are more likely than White people to be arrested and incarcerated and face harsher punishment in the criminal justice system. In addition, Black students are more likely to be brought into contact with the criminal justice system through school authorities, increasing the likelihood of future arrests and incarceration. Other examples of how Black and Brown residents disproportionately experience the criminal justice system include the following:

• The Southern Coalition for Social Justice (2020) found that Black students in Wake County were 7.3 times more likely than White students to receive a suspension. The ability to be successful in school can be difficult for children who miss class due to suspensions on their records. Suspensions are a key part of the "school to prison pipeline" as they punish students instead of providing age-appropriate supports (i.e., tutoring and counseling), stigmatize young

people as "troublesome," and often result in them being bored and unmonitored if their caregivers are working or are otherwise unavailable to supervise them during school hours.
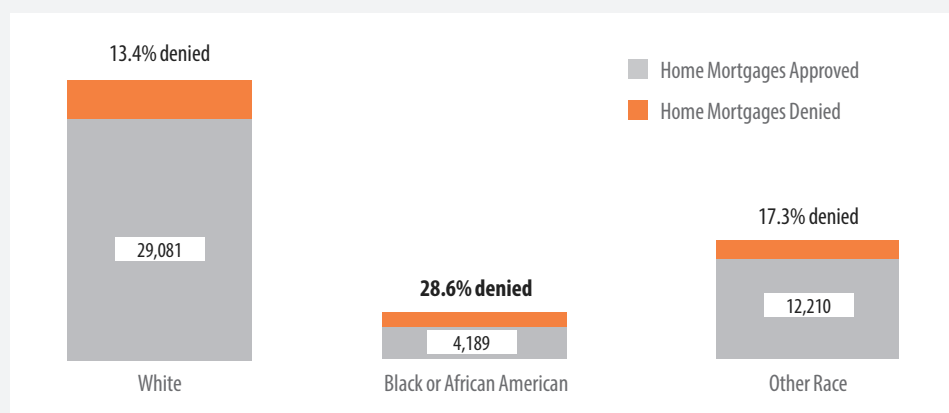
- Black students in Wake County make up more than half of school suspensions, despite representing 22% of the school-age population. Black and Hispanic students combined account for three-quarters of school suspensions.

- From 2018 to 2020, Black people made up 49% of warrantless misdemeanor arrests, 49% of traffic stops, and 57% of traffic stops resulting in arrests in Wake County, despite making up only 20% of the total population.

● ECONOMIC MOBILITY 💵

Prior to the 2020 pandemic and economic crisis, wide disparities in economic outcomes existed between White residents and residents of color in Wake County, including notable gaps in employment and wages. In 2019, the unemployment rate in Wake County was 7.3% among Black residents and 3.1% among White residents. Black and Hispanic/Latino residents have a lower median household income and are disproportionately in low-wage jobs compared with White residents. These low-wage jobs were hit the hardest by the 2020 pandemic and unemployment crisis, and in January 2021 the number of low-wage jobs was nearly 24% lower than 1 year earlier.

Homeownership and housing access is a central component of economic mobility because it provides a source of stability, access to known neighborhood assets (e.g. schools, libraries, and healthcare providers), and a means to leverage financial wealth building though home equity and credit. Despite making up more than 20% of the population, Black homebuyers received less than 10% of the mortgage loans approved in Wake County in 2019, and their rejection rate was more than twice the rate of White mortgage applicants (see **Exhibit 7**).

Exhibit 7. Home Mortgage Approvals and Application Denial Rates in Wake County, 2019

13.4% denied

■ Home Mortgages Approved
■ Home Mortgages Denied

29,081

17.3% denied

28.6% denied

12,210

4,189

White   Black or African American   Other Race

Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, 2019. Other Race includes Asian, multiracial, and race not disclosed.

EDUCATION EQUITY 🎓

Racial and ethnic disparities in education are evident in both the composition of students in underfunded schools and the educational outcomes of students. In 2020, 54% of Black and 52% of Hispanic/Latino elementary school students attended Title 1 schools compared with 18% of White students (see **Exhibit 8**). Although high school graduation rates have improved over the last decade, a large gap remains between Black (84%), Hispanic/Latino (77%), and White (95%) students.

Exhibit 8. Elementary School Attendance in Wake County by Race, Ethnicity, and Title 1 School Status, 2020–2021


Source: WCPSS District Facts. https://www.wcpss.net/Domain/100
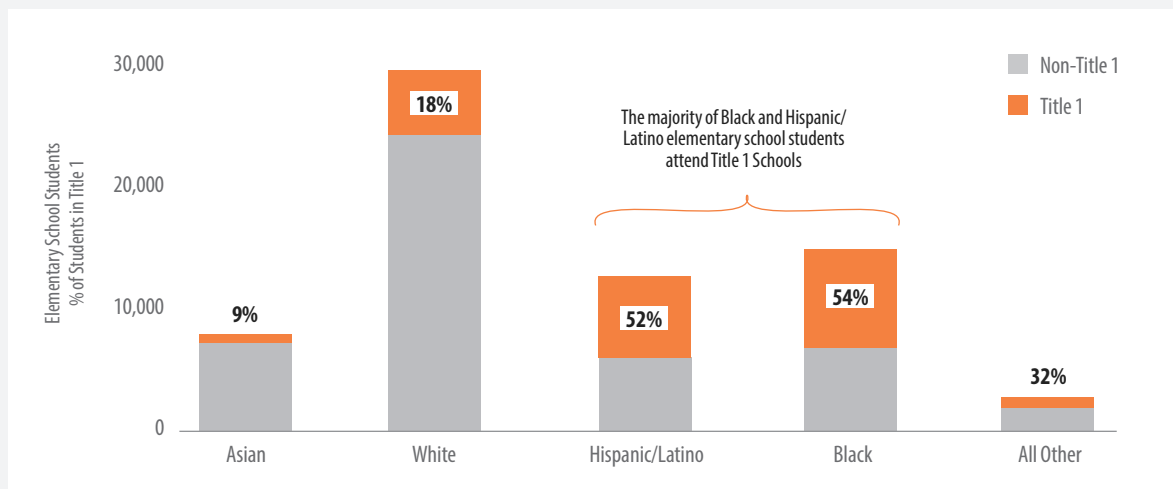
HEALTH EQUITY ➕

Large gaps remain in health access and health outcomes by race and ethnicity. For example, 30% of Wake County's Hispanic/Latino population does not have health insurance. This figure is over 40% for working-age adults (see **Exhibit 9**). A Black child born in Wake County has an estimated life expectancy 4 years shorter than a White child. In 2020, the COVID pandemic resulted in a disproportionately high share of deaths among Black residents of Wake County and decreased the national average life expectancy for Black adults by 2.7 years.

Recognizing the inequities that people of color experience in regard to criminal justice, economics, education, and health, working groups were formed and focused on ways to begin to dismantle the systems that can lead to these distinctly disparate negative outcomes for Black and Brown people in Wake County. The results from the working groups are described in the Blueprint visions, goals, and action items in the following section. More detailed results from the rapid data assessment are presented in Appendix A.

Exhibit 9. Percentage of Wake County Population Without Health Insurance Coverage, 2019
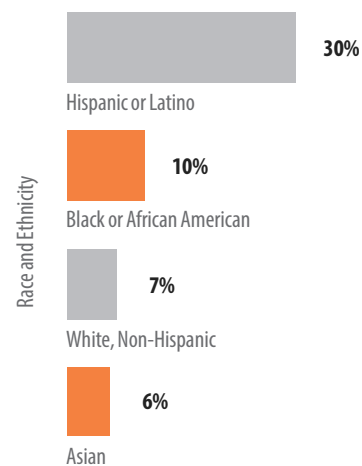
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019 1-Year Estimates.

Blueprint Focus Areas

The Blueprint was developed through the lens of reimagining systems, programs, and policies that enable residents of color in Wake County to prosper and thrive in areas of criminal justice, economic mobility, education equity, and health equity. The Blueprint is built on these four foundational elements of well-being to address the current racial and ethnic disparities that exist across the county. The Blueprint focus areas each include a vision, goals, and targeted action items that participating organizations will pursue. Each focus area is highlighted in **Exhibit 10** with its corresponding vision.

Exhibit 10. Vision for each Focus Area

FOCUS AREA	VISION
⚖ Criminal Justice	A Wake County where Black and Brown residents do not have disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system, and all its institutions and organizations are coordinated to serve and support citizens equitably.
💵 Economic Mobility	A Wake County where Black and Brown residents are free to choose and pursue their desired path of economic mobility and prosperity without hindrance.
🎓 Educational Equity	A Wake County with an equitable education system in which Black and Brown children have unfettered access to the experiences and environments that enable them to become their full and best selves without systemic barriers.
🏥 Health Equity	A Wake County with a healthcare system in which Black and Brown residents can attain their highest level of health and well-being.

Building on these visions for each focus area, the working groups laid out target goals with desired impacts. These are described in more detail by each focus area below. The specific immediate- and short-term action items identified as of December 2021 are listed in Appendix C. However, these actions will change rapidly as working group members begin implementing the Blueprint in early 2022. A data dashboard with metrics is available at www.abetterwake.com/blueprint to help track progress over time and spark wider conversations about policies, programs, and data needs.

• CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Criminal Justice working group developed targeted goals at several points on the continuum of the criminal justice system to pursue change that could impact Black and Brown residents from elementary school to adulthood. The long-term, anticipated results of these efforts are a reduced criminal justice presence in Wake County, accurate and accessible data about the criminal justice system, and increased trust between people of color and local law enforcement and court representatives. **Exhibit 11** describes the working group's vision, goals, and desired long-term impacts.

Exhibit 11. Vision, Goals, and Long-term Impacts for the Criminal Justice Focus Area

Vision: A Wake County where Black and Brown residents do not have disproportionate contact with the criminal justice system, and all its institutions and organizations are coordinated to serve and support citizens equitably.

CATEGORY	GOALS	LONG-TERM IMPACTS
Pipeline to Prison	**Goal 1: Re-envision school safety, and the perception of safety, to re-establish schools as educational institutions, and not punitive places for Black and Brown children.**	Schools that are safe and healthy places for students of color to learn
Pipeline to Prison	**Goal 2: Create, test, and scale alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices that disproportionately affect students of color in the Wake County Public School System.**	Elimination of racial disparities in in-school disciplinary actions (i.e., suspensions, expulsions, arrests, law enforcement referrals) and overall reduction in the use of these actions Reduced School Resource Officers in schools alongside a significant increase in mental health counselors and youth development resources
Enforcement	**Goal 3: Reallocate resources to better address public safety and violence prevention and reduce resources that penalize people of color for administrative and nonviolent offenses.**	Elimination of racial disparities in arrests, and decrease in the jail population and overall arrests and jail detention
Enforcement	**Goal 4: Improve relationship between law enforcement and Black and Brown residents of Wake County.**	Reduced penalties (including deflection and diversion) for nonviolent crimes and eliminated racial bias in nonviolent crimes charged to people of color
Enforcement	**Goal 5: Create a Community Response Department of trained medical and mental health and social work professionals.**	Increase in trust between Black and Brown Wake County residents and law enforcement representatives through the elimination of use of force tactics and increased alignment between community needs and law enforcement resources and actions
Criminal Justice System & Courts	**Goal 6: Identify and address (historically and prospectively) ways in which poverty and/or lack of income create unintended and unfair collateral consequences for Black and Brown residents involved in the criminal justice system.**	Elimination of the role of criminal justice system fines and fees in the poverty cycle experienced by people of color who are involved in the criminal justice system Increased transportation options for people of color currently and previously involved in the criminal justice system Reduced poverty and income racial disparities
Criminal Justice System & Courts	**Goal 7: Prioritize public safety resources to address violent crime.**	Reduction in violent crimes due to a reallocation of resources Reduction in overrepresentation of people of color in criminal justice system Reduced law enforcement and criminal justice system "footprint" in Wake County
Criminal Justice System & Courts	**Goal 8: Identify policies and practices within the criminal justice system that add to the overrepresentation of and disparate outcomes for people of color and promote evidence-based solutions to reduce criminal justice system disparities.**	Elimination of racial disparities in the criminal justice system and courts
Data Transparency	**Goal 9: Establish transparent baseline data, ongoing data collection and data publication procedures at each point on the criminal justice system continuum.**	Establishment and maintenance of accurate and accessible data on the criminal justice system performance and on the population affected in Wake County Strengthened ability to engage in public conversations about improvement needs and resource allocation needs to eliminate the disproportionate effect of the criminal justice system on Black and Brown residents Greater criminal justice system accountability based on accurate, transparent, and consistent data

Data were identified to track the long-term impact of the working group's efforts. The available data are limited, and thus aspirational data are also included here to reflect the data that would support a more comprehensive understanding of long-term impact. **Exhibit 12** summarizes the working group's current outcome metrics and aspirational metrics.

Exhibit 12. Current and Aspirational Outcome Metrics for the Criminal Justice Focus Area

CURRENT OUTCOME METRICS	ASPIRATIONAL OUTCOME METRICS
Short- and long-term school suspensions and expulsions; county level **Arrests by race and ethnicity; county level**	Short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement, and arrests by race and ethnicity; school level Share of students entering diversionary programs by race and ethnicity; school level Share of school- or district-level budgetary spending on mental health counselors, youth development training, law enforcement Ratio of police officers (resource officers) to counselors; school level
Traffic stops by race and ethnicity; county level **Driver/passenger searches by race and ethnicity; county level** **Enforcement action by race and ethnicity, including citations issued and on-view arrests; county level**	Traffic stops, searches, and enforcement actions by race and ethnicity; by police district Arrests, incidents of use of force, and officer-involved shootings by race and ethnicity; census tract or police district level Share of Wake County budgetary spending on mental health professionals, mental health training, equity training, and other community-based priorities compared to spending on law enforcement and courts Share of court reviewed charges for violent vs. nonviolent crimes or violations
No metric identified	Sentencing data by race and ethnicity; county level Rate of use of advanced supervised release; county level Court fees issued and court fees waived by race and ethnicity; county level

● ECONOMIC MOBILITY

The Economic Mobility working group developed goals to support each aspect of Black and Brown residents' path toward greater economic opportunity and stability. The goals range from affordable housing rental and ownership options, to workforce skills development and employment, to small business contracting opportunities for business owners of color and personal financial well-being. The intended result is a strengthened economic mobility ecosystem in which residents of color can define and achieve their personal vision of prosperity. **Exhibit 13** describes the working group's vision, goals, and desired long-term impacts.

Exhibit 13. Vision, Goals, and Long-term Impacts for the Economic Mobility Focus Area

Vision: A Wake County where Black and Brown residents are free to choose and pursue their desired path of economic mobility and prosperity without hindrance.		
CATEGORY	**GOALS**	**LONG-TERM IMPACTS**
Affordable Housing	**Goal 1: Reduce barriers to accessing affordable housing for people of color with prior evictions and minor criminal offenses on record.**	Elimination of housing and neighborhood displacement for people of color with a focus on people of color involved with the criminal justice system Increased wealth; reduced racial wealth disparity Increase in people of color living in stable and affordable housing Increase in people of color living in stable and affordable housing Community members' voices are heard, considered, and accounted for in housing development decision-making Reduction in the displacement of people of color in proximity to developed transit/business corridors
	Goal 2: Increase pathways for wealth-building for people of color through creation of, and access to, affordable rental and homeownership opportunities, including new homeownership and homeownership retention.	
	Goal 3: Engage in countywide discussions on use of data to determine homeownership, land retention and acquisition, and affordable rental development strategies.	
	Goal 4: Increase involvement of community members in decision-making about affordable housing strategies, including land retention and acquisition for affordable housing development and affordable housing ownership and rental options without overburdening community members.	
	Goal 5: Develop an equitable Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) proposal to influence how low-income housing tax credit applications are scored and funded.	
	Goal 6: Support Black and Brown landowners along bus rapid transit (BRT) and commuter rail corridors to determine the best personalized options for anticipated land price and tax value escalation from transit service improvements.	
Transportation and Access to Jobs	**Goal 7: Support extension of current pandemic transit fare suspensions into permanent zero fare transit policy regionwide.**	Permanent adoption of zero fare policy for low-income residents (or all residents based on transportation fare recovery ratio) Increased access to jobs, education, childcare, healthcare via public transportation infrastructure
	Goal 8: Create a regional transportation and housing vision and plan, with affordability and equitable development as primary pillars of the initiative.	

Workforce Development	**Goal 9: Create more registered apprenticeships that are industry and Department of Labor recognized. Create more opportunities to earn while you learn for students. Scholarships are not enough (e.g., students need access to childcare, food security, affordable housing, affordable transit).**	Reduced racial disparities in high-skill, high-pay occupations (and/or high-growth industries) More people of color in good paying jobs through apprenticeships
	Goal 10: Increase access to local workforce development and skills training initiatives.	
Worker Pay	**Goal 11: Identify and target industries that have increased opportunities for upward mobility.**	Reduced racial disparities in high-skill, high-pay occupations (and/or high-growth industries) Reduced racial disparities in median household income and employment rate
	Goal 12: Increase percentage of jobs that pay a living wage by supporting living wage certification programs for business.	
	Goal 13: Identify and share emerging or promising best practices and policies for changing business models to provide more living wages.	
Small Business	**Goal 14: Increase government and corporate procurement spending with businesses owned by people of color.**	Reduced racial disparities in business ownership, revenue, and employee size Increased wealth generation from business ownership for Black and Brown business owners
	Goal 15: Prepare business owners of color for contracting opportunities.	
	Goal 16: Ensure that Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) have access to entrepreneurial support resources.	Reduced racial disparities in business ownership, revenue, and employee size Increased wealth generation from business ownership for Black and Brown business owners
Banking, Credit, and Debt Relief	**Goal 17: Reimagine bankability (personal and business banking) to reduce the racial and ethnic bias in financial institutions' banking practices, including financial planning, lending, and investment services for people and businesses of color.**	Reduced racial disparities in personal net worth Increased median net worth for people of color Reduced debt for students of color Education is more affordable and accessible
	Goal 18: Relieve financial burdens and debt to better position workers to take advantage of economic mobility opportunities.	
	Goals 19: Simplify systems and processes for debt relief to better connect people to existing programs.	

Data were identified to track the long-term impact of the working group's efforts. The available data are limited, and thus aspirational data are also included here to reflect the data that would support a more comprehensive understanding of long-term impact. **Exhibit 14** summarizes the working group's current outcome metrics and aspirational metrics.

Exhibit 14. Current and Aspirational Outcome Metrics for the Economic Mobility Focus Area

CURRENT OUTCOME METRICS	ASPIRATIONAL OUTCOME METRICS
Share of home mortgages granted to homeowners of color; county level **Approval rate for mortgages from applicants of color; county level**	Evictions by race and ethnicity; county or census tract level Affordable housing application acceptances/rejections; county level Affordable housing option utilization, including rental and ownership options; county or census tract level Employment and housing density map in relation to public transportation infrastructure; census tract level
Countywide unemployment rate by race and ethnicity **Countywide occupation by race and ethnicity with average wage compared to living wage**	Active apprentices/interns by race and ethnicity, including industry, occupation and wage detail; county level Participation rates in apprenticeship programs; county level Count and industry of company-sponsored apprenticeships/internships; county level Tracking of Wake County businesses that pay a living wage; county level Percent change in quality jobs, including race and ethnicity of employees in quality jobs; county level
Share of federal spending in Wake County by business owner race and ethnicity; county level	Share of state and county spending in Wake County by business owner race and ethnicity Share of private spending in Wake County by business owner race and ethnicity Business ownership by race and ethnicity, including HUB and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certifications; municipal and county level
Median income by census tract overlaid with race and ethnicity **Unbanked and underbanked population by race and ethnicity; county level**	Banking relationships with households and businesses, including use of lines of credit or other credit/debt mechanisms Net worth by race and ethnicity; census tract and county level Student debt by race and ethnicity; census tract and county level

• EDUCATION EQUITY

The Education Equity working group determined goals to support Black and Brown students comprehensively and ensure that schools are safe and supportive learning environments. This transformation includes strengthening the cultural competency and responsiveness of educators, prioritizing the mental health of students of color, addressing the school-to-prison pipeline, and increasing the voice and power of families within the school system. The long-term impacts of these goals are increased capacity within school administrators and teachers about youth development and racial equity, an overall reduction in disciplinary actions, and an elimination of the overrepresentation of Black and Brown students receiving disciplinary actions. **Exhibit 15** describes the working group's vision, goals, and desired long-term impacts.

Exhibit 15. Vision, Goals, and Long-term Impacts for the Education Equity Focus Area

Vision: A Wake County with an equitable education system in which Black and Brown children have unfettered access to the experiences and environments that enable them to become their full and best selves without systemic barriers.

CATEGORY	GOALS	LONG-TERM IMPACTS
Cultural and Racial Equity Education for Educators	**Goal 1: Equip and prepare existing and new teachers and administrators with racial equity resources, professional development, racial bias training, and support to imbed racial equity and cultural competency in student content, teaching methods, and teaching practices.**	Greater awareness of and responsiveness to the cross-cultural backgrounds of students, teachers, and educators resulting in higher quality education for all students
	Goal 2: Include racial equity and cultural competency evaluation criteria within recruitment and hiring processes.	More teachers and administrators who can readily empathize and respond appropriately to the variety of cultural backgrounds of students
	Goal 3: Revise educator evaluation to include cultural responsiveness and inclusion into school climate evaluation.	School environment that is safe and accepting of all students' background, culture, and experience
	Goal 4: Work directly with Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), including district and school board, to review curriculum and instruction practices for diverse student populations.	Greater social awareness of the cross-cultural backgrounds and experiences of students
	Goal 5: Use instructional practices that sustain the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of multilingual students and students of color.	Better educated students
Mental Health	**Goal 6: Prioritize school-based mental health training, providers, and support staff in budget planning, including equipping instructors and administrators who interact with students the most each day.**	School is a safe environment where students access resources they need to grow and learn
	Goal 7: Provide mental health support for teachers, administrators, and staff.	Mental health resources available and accessible for teachers and administrators
Pipeline to Prison	**Goal 8: Reform the role of police in schools.**	Fewer students of color disciplined in schools
	Goal 9: Devise effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices in WCPSS.	Significant reduction in the number of arrests and referrals of students to law enforcement
		Schools that are safe, healthy places for students to learn
		Elimination of racial disparities in in-school disciplinary actions (i.e., suspensions, expulsions, arrests, law enforcement referrals)
Community Engagement for Local Policy Change	**Goal 10: Educate families and the community about the power of their voices for influencing local policy for more equitable education.**	Schools that reflect the communities in which they are located
		Schools that are equitably funded and resourced

Data were identified to track the long-term impact of the working group's efforts. The available data are limited, and thus aspirational data are also included here to reflect the data that would support a more comprehensive understanding of long-term impact. **Exhibit 16** summarizes the working group's current outcome metrics and aspirational metrics.

Exhibit 16. **Current and Aspirational Outcome Metrics for the Education Equity Focus Area**

CURRENT OUTCOME METRICS	ASPIRATIONAL OUTCOME METRICS
Short- and long-term suspensions and expulsions by race and ethnicity; county level **Demographic makeup of school personnel and students; county level**	End-of-Grade test scores: reading/math, 3rd grade by race and ethnicity; county level Short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement, and arrests by race and ethnicity; school level Share of students entering diversionary programs by race and ethnicity; school level Share of school or district-level budgetary spend on mental health counselors, youth development training, law enforcement Ratio of police officers (resource officers) to counselors; school level Juvenile justice referrals/interactions by race and ethnicity; school and county level Representation of community members on school board Representation of community members' voices and experiences; school level

• HEALTH EQUITY

The Health Equity working group developed goals to increase healthcare access for Black and Brown Wake County residents, improve data to represent people of color accurately within the broader healthcare system, and strengthen data as a tool for greater accountability about healthcare accessibility in the region. The desired result of this work is healthy Black and Brown residents who have access to the healthcare they need to thrive. **Exhibit 17** describes the working group's vision, goals, and desired long-term impacts.

Exhibit 17. Vision, Goals, and Long-term Impacts for the Health Equity Focus Area

Vision: A Wake County with a healthcare system in which Black and Brown residents can attain their highest level of health and well-being.		
CATEGORY	**GOALS**	**LONG-TERM IMPACTS**
Healthcare Access	**Goal 1: Increase communications and marketing of healthcare resources to people of color.**	Built capacity and increased investment in community-based health organizations and community-based health workers to deliver healthcare services and meet community health needs
	Goal 2: Increase vaccine access and adoption for people of color.	
	Goal 3: Increase access to mental health services for people of color.	Eliminated racial health disparities
	Goal 4: Increase access to healthy food for people of color.	Improved health outcomes for Black and Brown residents
Data	**Goal 5: Determine relevant and accurate data on health outcomes needed to hold systems accountable.**	Changed policies, programs, and investments that support Black and Brown residents' healthcare needs based on accurate data and information

Data were identified to track the long-term impact of the working group's efforts. The available data are limited, and thus aspirational data are also included here to reflect the data that would support a more comprehensive understanding of long-term impact. **Exhibit 18** summarizes the working group's current outcome metrics and aspirational metrics.

Exhibit 18. Current and Aspirational Outcome Metrics for the Health Equity Focus Area

CURRENT OUTCOME METRICS	ASPIRATIONAL OUTCOME METRICS
Uninsured rate by race and ethnicity; county level **Food access share by race and ethnicity; county level** **COVID-19 vaccination rate by race and ethnicity; county level**	Share of population without medical home (or access to quality and comprensive primary care) by race and ethnicity; census tract and county level Number of healthcare professionals per 1,000 residents; census tract level Community-based health organizations' services/reach; census tract level Healthcare, including mental health services, provision, and access by race, ethnicity, age, income level, and insurance coverage; census tract and county level

What is Next?

The launch of this Blueprint is the beginning of a long-term process to establish ongoing goals and actions to dismantle systemic racism in Wake County. To help transition the Blueprint into the implementation phase, working group members discussed the need for an accountability roadmap to track and pursue the priorities and actions documented. The accountability roadmap will be fleshed out in 2022. To jumpstart this effort, RTI researched best practices and facilitated sessions with working group members to brainstorm key conditions that will be important to foster success for the Blueprint's implementation. They are detailed below.

CONDITIONS THAT FOSTER SUCCESS AND INFORM BLUEPRINT EVOLUTION

Research and collective working group discussions identified six conditions that will be important to consider as the work from the Blueprint advances:

1. **Support from backbone organizations:** The Raleigh Chamber, the DEI Alliance, Wake County Government, and the Raleigh-Apex NAACP will serve as the backbone organizations of the Blueprint ongoing process to ensure centralized coordination and communication among working group members and affiliated organizations. The backbone leads will facilitate the work of the whole collective effort and reinforce transparency among active members.

2. **Commitment from individuals engaged in the process:** Each individual working explicitly to advance the Blueprint will relay their commitment to the vision and goals of this effort and engage collectively in the agreed upon actions to dismantle systemic racism in Wake County.

3. **Performance metrics to track progress:** Working groups will identify metrics to track the inputs and actions of the collective efforts and monitor short-term outcomes and impacts. These data can be used to celebrate wins and course correct when progress is lacking.

4. **Consistent communications and interactions:** Frequent engagement and communication among working group members and backbone organizations will ensure that those participating stay informed, coordinated, and aligned. A regular cadence of meetings, emails, and newsletters can foster information sharing and small group discussions. At the outset of Blueprint implementation, working groups will meet every 4 to 6 weeks and adjust frequency if needed.

5. **Leads and champions:** Leads will be point people who take on a primary role in implementing a select goal or set of goals, and champions will take on a supportive role to provide backup to the leads. Leads and champions will be identified at the onset of the Blueprint implementation and will guide the targeted actions of working group members.

6. **Shared resources (time, staffing, technical assistance, money):**
   Blueprint implementation will require a pool of shared resources across the participating organizations. The work to dismantle systemic racism in Wake County is a collective endeavor, and inter-organizational staffing, shared time, the provision of technical expertise and assistance, and collaborative fundraising will be critical resources to enabling sustained, meaningful action.

GUIDEPOSTS TO GAUGE SUCCESS IN YEAR 1

To provide further vision and guideposts to inform the collective progress for the Blueprint's efforts, working group members brainstormed what success looks like in a year. These milestones provide signals to the working groups that their efforts are making an impact. These milestones include greater acknowledgement of systemic racism across the county, Black and Brown residents feeling seen, incorporation of identified goals into local organizations' strategic planning, and greater buy-in for collective work to end systemic racism:

➔ Acknowledgement of systemic racism increases across Wake County. The Blueprint has, so far, been a "collection of the willing" who readily recognize the systemic racism that exists in Wake County. Working group members want the Blueprint to stay focused on the systems that create barriers and further racism and anticipate that the "collection of the willing" will grow as the Blueprint is implemented.

➔ Black and Brown Wake County residents feel seen. This Blueprint focuses on dismantling systemic racism and reducing its impacts on people of color. Working groups aim to implement, communicate, and continue ongoing planning to ensure that people of color feel seen and their experiences are fully recognized in more significant ways in the systems of criminal justice, economy, education, and health.

➔ Incorporation of Blueprint goals into participating organizations' strategic plans. The systemic change sought by working group members is a long-term endeavor and will require sustained commitment and resources. The goals and ideas established are inter-connected. The working group members believe there is opportunity to make progress with multiple organizations embedding ideas and goals into each organization's strategic priorities, thus reducing the likelihood of singular or intermittent action.

➔ Blueprint is a means to greater shared ideation, ownership, and narrative change. Working group members seek to communicate about the Blueprint in a way that builds shared ownership and fosters a shared narrative about systemic racism and how to change it. Year 1 success will be a Blueprint that leverages communication tools that support a range of collective work across the county.

The effort to dismantle systemic racism is large, complicated, and requires a collection of the willing to re-envision Wake County. A Better Wake invites you to learn more about the Blueprint on its website (https://abetterwake.com/blueprint) and the A Better Wake website (https://abetterwake.com).

Appendix A:

Rapid Data Assessment for Wake County, North Carolina

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

RTI International, in collaboration with the Triangle Diversity, Equity, & Inclusivity Alliance (DEI Alliance), is developing a blueprint to dismantle systemic racism and build an inclusive economy in Wake County. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice movements revealed deep inequities in health, education, criminal justice, and economic opportunity across the United States, and the DEI Alliance is working with government, academic, private sector, and nonprofit partners to address these challenges in Wake County and build a more inclusive economy moving forward.

To start this work, RTI conducted a rapid assessment in April 2021 of the state of health, education, criminal justice, and economic mobility for Black and Brown communities in Wake County, North Carolina. Residents of color, including Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and multiethnic[3] ommunities, make up more than 40% of the county's population. The purpose is to highlight the critical systemic challenges communities face, set a baseline for areas of action, and illustrate how these structures cut across demographic and geographic areas.

Background: Demographics of Wake County, North Carolina

Wake County, North Carolina, is among the fastest growing counties in the United States, with its population growing by nearly 23,000 residents per year from 2010 to 2019, an average annual rate of 2.3%. In 2019, its population reached over 1.1 million, surpassing Mecklenburg County as the largest county in North Carolina by population. It is an increasingly diverse county as seen in Figure 1: in 2019, residents of color in Wake County made up 40.6% of the population, an increase from less than 38% in 2010.

Figure 1. Population, Racial, and Ethnic Demographics of Wake County, 2010 and 2019
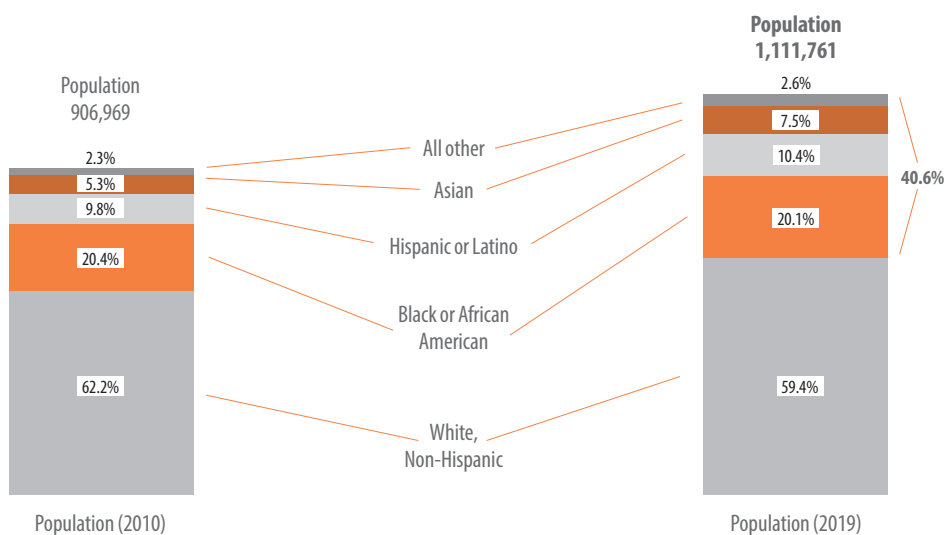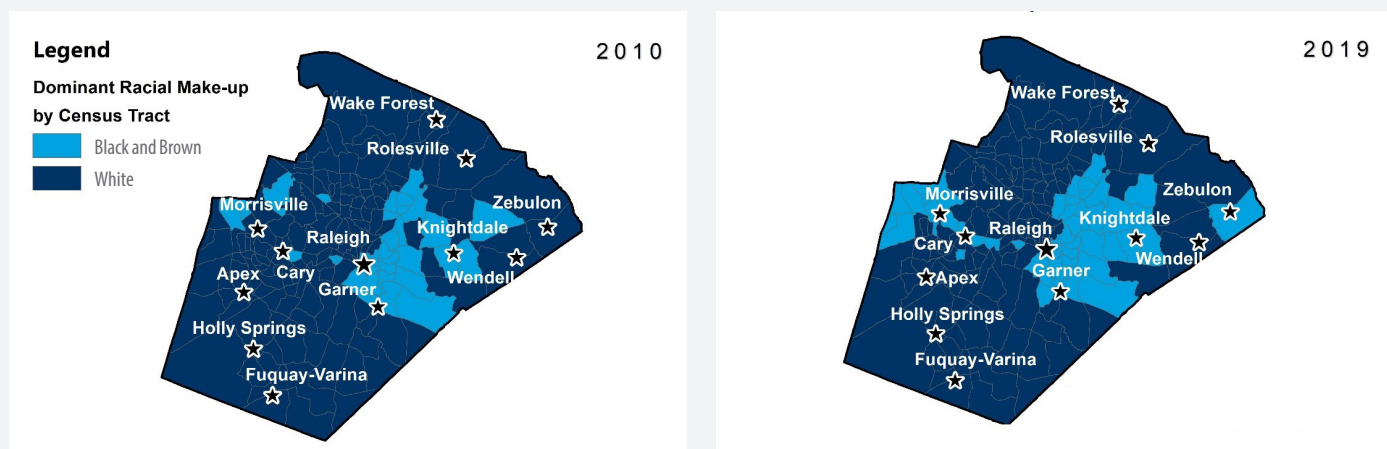

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates.

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3 For the purpose of this report, RTI uses the racial and ethnic definitions as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Residents of color include Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Multiracial, Other, Native American, and Pacific Islander in this report.

Of that 40%, about half is Black; one-fourth is Hispanic or Latino; and one-fourth includes Asian, multiracial, and Native American/Pacific Islander.[4] From 2010 to 2019, Asian and Hispanic or Latino were the fastest growing racial and ethnic groups in Wake County.

Majority-minority census tracts (defined as 50% or more of the population identified as residents of color) show where communities of color are concentrated in the county and how those communities have changed over the past decade. In 2010, communities of color were primarily concentrated southeast, east, and northeast of Raleigh. By 2019, the minority population increased in areas to the northeast of Raleigh between Knightdale, Wendell, and Rolesville and into Garner and Morrisville as shown in Figure 2. This is the effect of several trends, including displacement of low-income Black families to places like Knightdale, Wendell, and Garner because of high housing costs in Raleigh and migration of Asian and Hispanic/Latino residents and families into the county.

Figure 2. Majority Racial and Ethnic Makeup in Wake County by Census Tract, 2010 and 2019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2019 ACS 5-Year Averages.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In the United States, Black people are more likely than white people to be arrested and incarcerated and face longer sentences in the criminal justice system. This is a product of many factors, including the over-policing and targeting of Black communities; the perception that Black people are suspicious, dangerous, or more likely to be engaged in criminal activity; and racial biases among law enforcement, prosecutors, juries, and judges.

Incarceration Rates by Race and Ethnicity

Inconsistencies in data reporting and various layers of the prison system (i.e., federal prisons, state prisons, local jails, parole, probation) make it difficult to capture

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4 Multiracial, Other, Native American, and Pacific Islander make up 2.6% of the population of Wake County. For this report, they are included as "all other." In most cases, the sample size is too small to have accurate, detailed data at the county level for these groups based on census definitions.

precisely how many Wake County residents are incarcerated or involved in the prison system. Across all levels of the prison system, Black men are overrepresented relative to their share of the population. According to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) in 2021, 28,671 individuals were in state prison, following a decade of decline in the state prison population from over 40,000 in 2011. Of those, 51% were Black and 40% were White, despite Black residents making up only 21% of the state's population (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. **Share of People Incarcerated in State Prisons in North Carolina by Race and Ethnicity, 2020**
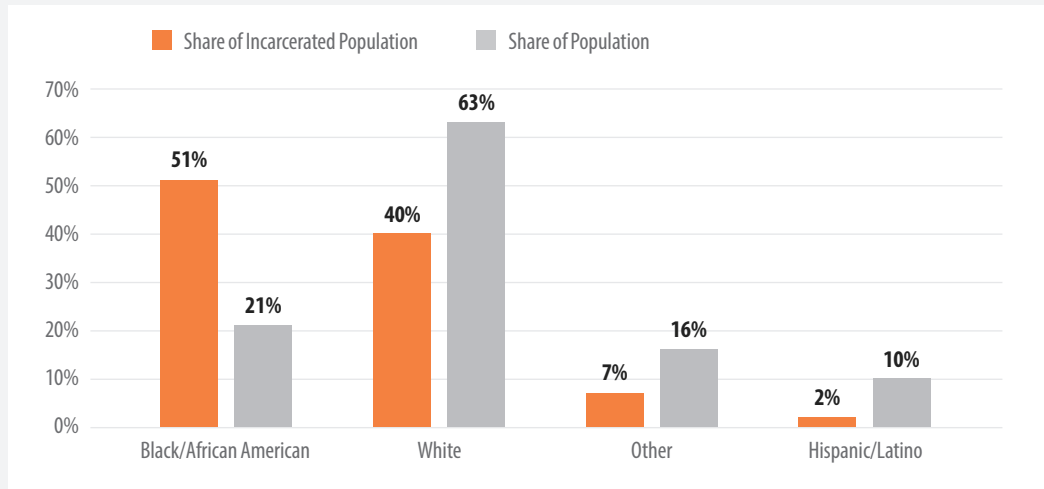
Source: North Carolina DPS. https://www.ncdps.gov/about-dps/department-public-safety-statistics

Juvenile Justice

Disparities in juvenile justice translate into engagement with the legal system as adults. Black youth are at risk from higher rates of school suspensions and disciplinary actions in school. High rates of school-based criminal complaints make Black youth victims of the school-to-prison pipeline. According to the Southern Coalition for Social Justice's Racial Equity Report Card (2019–2020), 75.3% of all school-based complaints in Wake County were filed against Black youth even though they make up 22.4% of the school-age population.[5]

Youth who enter the criminal justice system through arrests or school-based complaints and are convicted end up in juvenile detention or in juvenile crime prevention council diversion programs. Wake County has a low rate of juvenile detention (0.67 per 10,000 youth), falling far below the state average and the average of urban counties, including Mecklenburg, Durham, and Guilford. A higher share of youth in the criminal justice system enter community-based diversion programs in Wake County: although fewer than 100 youth were detained in 2019, more than 1,500 entered community-based crime prevention programs,[6] and that figure remained similar in 2020.

5 Southern Coalition for Social Justice. (n.d.). Racial equity report card, Wake County schools. 2019-2020. https://rerc.southerncoalition. org/pdf/report-card-by-agency?var=agencyId:wake-county-in-north-carolina-nc&var=reportCardStartYear:2019

6 North Carolina Department of Public Safety. (n.d.). County databooks. https://www.ncdps.gov/Juvenile-Justice/Community-Programs/Juvenile-Crime-Prevention-Councils/JCPC-Planning-Process/County-Databooks

Additional Research

The disparity in the rate of incarceration is an outcome of many factors that compound disparities in the criminal justice system. For adults, additional research at the local level could illuminate racial and ethnic disparities in the following:

→ Rates of policing by neighborhood and racial/ethnic makeup of neighborhoods

→ Rates of arrests for nonviolent drug offenses

→ Traffic violations and driver's license suspensions

→ Cash bail

RTI recommends additional research on data available related to policing, arrests, driver's license suspensions, and cash bail over the course of the Blueprint development as these are areas where local action can be taken to address disparities in criminal justice outcomes.

EDUCATION EQUITY

Racial and ethnic disparities in education are evident in both the composition of students in high-risk schools and the educational outcomes of students. Black and Hispanic/Latino students are more likely to be in high-risk schools and are less likely to graduate high school and obtain postsecondary degrees. Wake County's high school graduation rates for students of all races have improved over the past decade, but large gaps remain in educational access and attainment by race and ethnicity.

*Racial and Ethnic Makeup of Title 1 Elementary Schools*

In the 2020–2021 school year, 32% of Wake County elementary school students attended Title 1 schools, where more than 40% of children come from low-income families and which receive additional federal support to help students with financial hardship.[7] Title 1 is one indicator of a high-risk school. As seen in Figure 4, Title 1 elementary school enrollment varies widely by race and ethnicity: 18% of White elementary school children in Wake County attend Title 1 schools compared with 54% of Black students and 52% of Hispanic/Latino students. In total, Black and Hispanic children make up over two-thirds (67%) of students in Title 1 elementary schools in Wake County.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted K–12 education, with students and teachers abruptly moving to online learning. Preliminary national data show that students at all levels suffered educational setbacks. Additionally, research is showing that low-income and at-risk students were more likely to be disengaged from online learning because of a mix of technology, economic, and health factors. The long-term effects of this disengagement are currently unknown.[8]

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7 U.S. Department of Education. (2018, October 24). Improving basic programs operated by local educational agencies (Title I, Part A). https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html

8 Kuhfield, M., Soland, J., Tarasawa, B., Johnson, A., Ruzek, E., & Lewis, K. (2020, December 3). How is COVID-19 affecting student learning? Initial findings from fall 2020. Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/12/03/how-is-covid-19-affecting-student-learning/

Figure 4. Elementary School Attendance in Wake County by Race, Ethnicity, and Title 1 School Status, 2020–2021

Source: WCPSS District Facts. https://www.wcpss.net/Domain/100
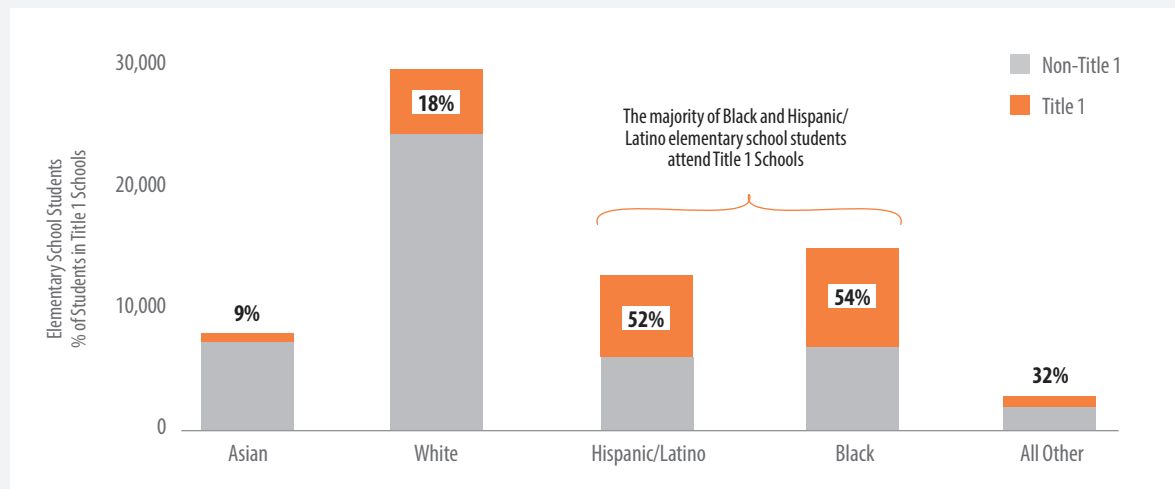
K–12 Education Outcomes
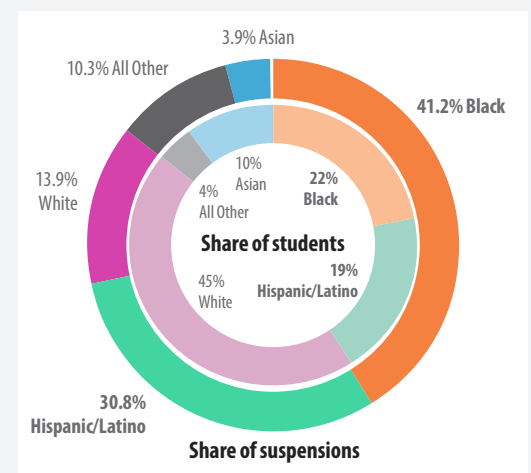
Rates of School Suspension

Biases and inequities in the school system present challenges that can lead to negative education outcomes and follow a child into adulthood. An examination of Wake County suspension and expulsion data from the 2019–2020 school year shows that Black students are disproportionately disciplined compared with students of other races/ethnicities, as seen in Figure 5. Although they make up 22% of the student population, they account for 41% of suspensions. Similarly, Hispanic/Latino students make up 18% of the student population but 31% of the suspensions.

The Southern Coalition for Social Justice (2020) found that Black students in Wake County were 7.3 times more likely than White students to be suspended. Success in school can be difficult for children who have suspensions on their records, and suspensions can form part of a pipeline into the criminal justice system as juveniles and as adults.[9]

High School Graduation Rates

Wake County Public Schools set a target for a 95% high school graduation rate by 2020, and there has been consistent improvement across all racial and ethnic groups over the past decade in reaching this goal. Yet, a persistent gap remains between White and non-White graduation rates. Graduation rates for Hispanic/Latino (77%) and Black

Figure 5. Share of School Suspensions and Share of Students in Wake County Public Schools by Race and Ethnicity, 2019–2020

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/data-reports/dropout-and-discipline-data/discipline-alp-and-dropout-annual-reports

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9 Southern Coalition for Social Justice. (n.d.). Racial equity report card, Wake County schools. 2019-2020. https://rerc.southerncoalition.org/pdf/report-card-by-agency?var=agencyId:wake-county-in-north-carolina-nc&var=reportCardStartYear:2019

(84%) students remain below those of White (95%) and Asian (97%) students. These overall gaps have narrowed between 2009 and 2018, however, as seen in Figure 6.

The improvement in Black and Hispanic/Latino graduation rates from 2009 to 2018 is encouraging, but as the following section describes, a large gap remains between races and ethnicities in the share of adults with high school and higher education degrees.

Figure 6. **High School Graduation Rates in Wake County Public Schools by Race and Ethnicity, 2009–2018**

Source: Wake County Public School System. http://webarchive.wcpss.net/results/reports/2019/grad-rate2009-2018.pdf
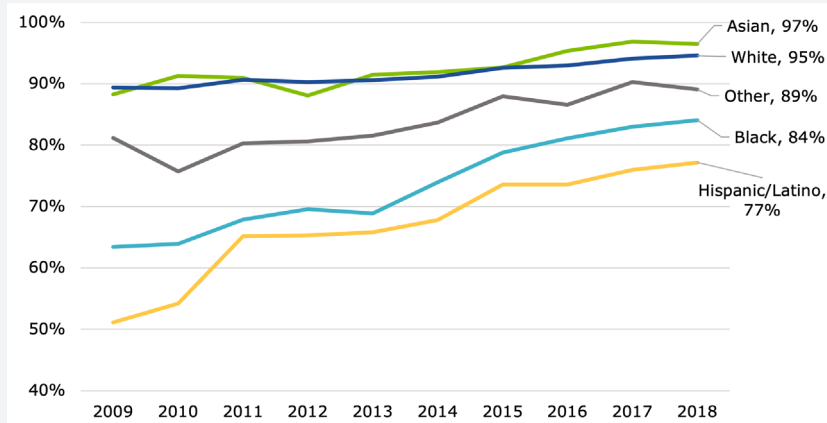
Educational Attainment of Adults

Wake County is one of the most highly educated places in the United States, where nearly 53% of adults have a bachelor's degree or higher, including nearly 20% with a graduate degree. Educational attainment is closely linked to the earning potential of adults living in Wake County: a high school graduate earns 34% more than a worker without a high school degree, whereas a worker with a bachelor's degree earns nearly double that of a high school graduate (see Table 1).

As seen in Figure 7, there are wide racial and ethnic disparities in educational attainment for adults in Wake County. Approximately 60% of White residents and 74% of Asian residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas only 33% of Black and 23% of Hispanic or Latino residents have a bachelor's degree. The disparity in higher education, combined with lower rates of high school graduation, has long-term effects on the ability of Black and Latino residents to get and retain high-paying jobs when competing in a labor market where more than half of the adult population holds a 4-year college degree.

Table 1. **Median Earnings in Wake County by Education Attainment, 2019**

HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL ATTAINED	MEDIAN INCOME
Less than high school graduate	$22,668
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	$30,567
Some college or associate's degree	$39,107
Bachelor's degree	$59,346
Graduate or professional degree	$76,753

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

Figure 7. Educational Attainment in Wake County by Race and Ethnicity, 2019

■ Bachelor's degree or higher ■ High school graduate or higher

Race/Ethnicity	Bachelor's degree or higher	High school graduate or higher
White (Not Hispanic or Latino)	59.9%	97.3%
Black	33.4%	90.5%
Asian	74.3%	92.7%
Hispanic or Latino	22.7%	64.0%
All Other	27.8%	69.3%
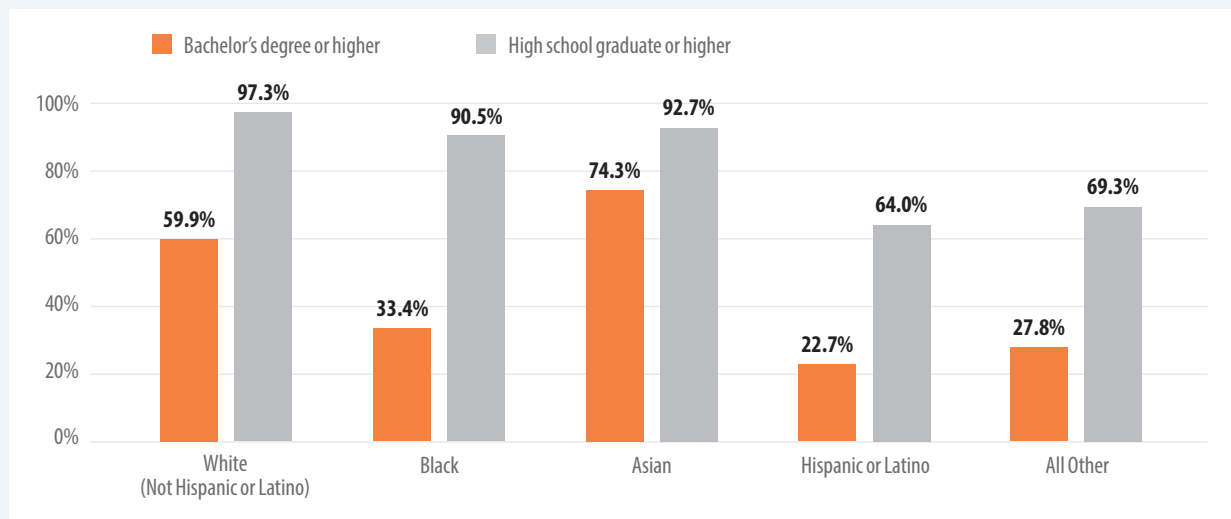
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates.

High-wage jobs in growing and future industry sectors such as tech, life science, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing require postsecondary education. Addressing economic disparities will require addressing disparities in high school completion and access to higher education.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Economic opportunity as measured by employment, income, poverty, and wealth presents challenges across racial and ethnic lines. The racial wealth gap in the United States is large: according to the Federal Reserve in 2019, the median net worth (assets minus liabilities) of a White household in the United States was $189,000, compared with $24,000 for a Black household—a nearly 8-fold difference. As seen in Figure 8, this wealth gap has fluctuated but remained persistently high for 3 decades. Notably, the gap remains large even when accounting for education level, household structure, age, and marital status. The nationwide racial wealth gap is multidimensional and related to many long-term structural biases, including employment, income, housing, education, and criminal justice.

In Wake County, wide gaps in employment, poverty, and homeownership contribute to disparities in economic opportunity. This includes gaps in employment rates, poverty rates, income levels, home value, and acceptance rate of home mortgage applications, which all contribute to racial and ethnic gaps in wealth generation.

Figure 8. Median Household Net Worth in the United States by Race and Ethnicity, 1989–2019

White, non-Hispanic $189.1
Other $74.5
Hispanic or Latino $36.1
Black $24.1
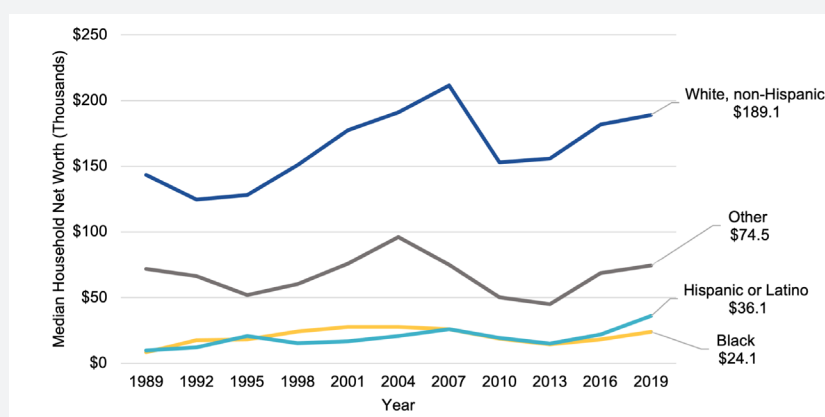
Source: U.S. Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances. https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/scfindex.htm

Employment

In 2019, before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, the unemployment rate for Black residents of Wake County was more than double that of White residents. As seen in Figure 9, Black unemployment in the county was 7.3% in 2019 compared with 3.1% for Non-Hispanic White workers. For reference, Black unemployment at the height of the pre-pandemic jobs expansion in 2019 was higher than White unemployment at the worst of the Great Recession. From 2010 to 2013, Non-Hispanic White unemployment was never reported to be higher than 6% in Wake County.

Figure 9. Unemployment Rate in Wake County by Race and Ethnicity, 2013–2019
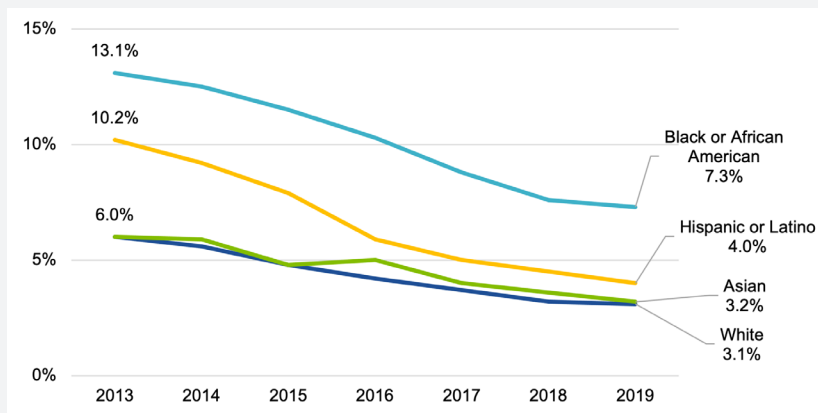

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Averages.

Income and Poverty

In Wake County as in much of the southern United States, there is a persistently wide gap between the median income for Black and White households: the median Black or Hispanic/Latino household earns 43% less than the median White household, as seen in Figure 10. Black and Hispanic/Latino residents are more likely to work in low-wage jobs.

In 2020, the economic impacts of the pandemic disproportionately impacted low-wage jobs. Opportunity Insights estimates a 23.8% loss of low-wage jobs in Wake County from January 2020 to January 2021 compared with marginal losses for high- and middle-wage jobs. Although many high-wage professional service jobs continued through telework options, low-wage jobs in restaurants, retail, hospitality, and building services were lost and, as the data show, did not rebound as many establishments reopened in the summer and fall.

Figure 10. Median Annual Household Income in Wake County by Race and Ethnicity, 2019
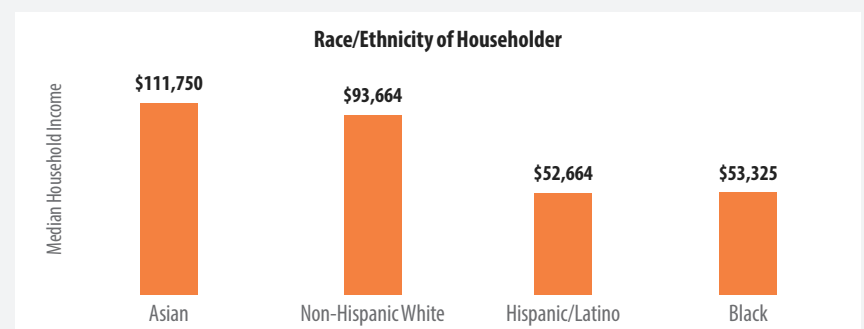
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Averages.

Percent Change in Employment*

In **Wake**, as of **January 27 2021**, employment rates among workers in the bottom wage quartile **decreased** by **25.5%** compared to January 2020 (not seasonally adjusted).

Jan 27, 2021

-1.2%
High Wage
(>$60K)

-6.7%
Middle Wage
($27K-$60K)

-23.8%
Low Wage
(<$27K)

Jan 20
First U.S. COVID-19 Case

Apr 15
Stimulus Payments Start

Mar 13
National Emergency Declared

Mar 27
CARES Act Enacted

Jan 04
Second Stimulus Payments Start

data source: **Earnin, Intuit, Kronos, Paychex**

*Change in employment rates (not seasonally adjusted), indexed to January 4-31, 2020. This series is based on payroll data from Paychex and Intuit, worker-level data on employment and earnings from Earnin, and timesheet data from Kronos. The dotted line is a prediction of employment rates based on Kronos and Paychex data.

last updated: **March 20, 2021**   *next update expected:* **March 26, 2021**

Source: Opportunity Insights, Track the Recovery https://tracktherecovery.org/

Poverty

Living in poverty can result in poor health outcomes, limited educational opportunities, and challenges for intergenerational economic mobility, particularly for Black Americans.[10] In Wake County, the areas with the highest poverty are concentrated southwest and southeast of Raleigh and areas north of downtown, as shown in Figure 12. Large percentages of Black and Hispanic/Latino children, 23% and 35% respectively, live in poverty in Wake County, whereas only 5% of White children live below the poverty line.[11]
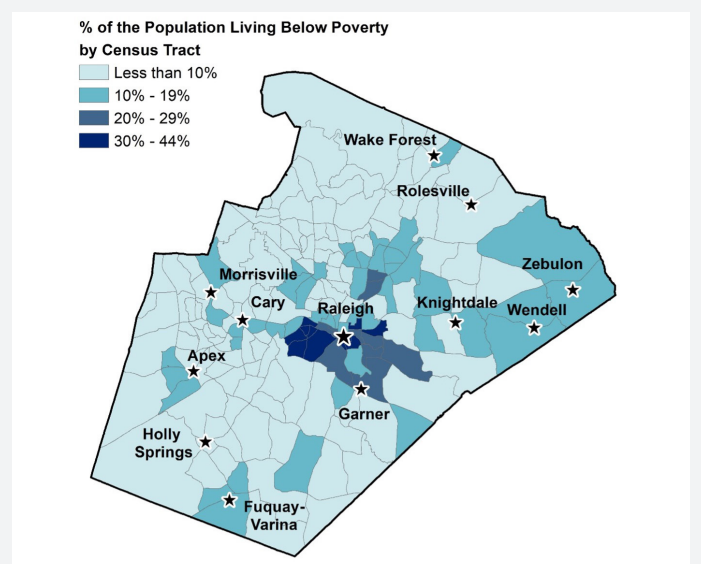
Housing

During the 20th century, government agencies and banks drew maps using the racial makeup in an area, and they classified locations as either desirable or undesirable. These maps were used to deny Black people access to

10 Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Jones, M., & Porter, S. (2020, May). Race and economic opportunity in the United States: An intergenerational perspective. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 135(2), 711–783. https://opportunityinsights.org/paper/race/

11 Wake County. (2019). Wake County 2019 community needs assessment: Opportunities and challenges. https://www.rexhealth.com/app/files/public/948514ec-e4b0-4522-99d6-3aec27e53e85/pdf-rex-aboutus-2019-wake-county-chna---report-final.pdf

Figure 2. **Majority Racial and Ethnic Makeup in Wake County by Census Tract, 2010 and 2019**

% of the Population Living Below Poverty by Census Tract

- Less than 10%
- 10% - 19%
- 20% - 29%
- 30% - 44%

Source: 2015 - 2019 American Community Survey Population Data

capital and prevented them from obtaining banking and loan services. These actions led to racial segregation and limited the investment in Black neighborhoods because Black communities were classified as being riskier and less credit-worthy than White communities. The results of these government policies are still apparent today. White communities often have better schools, higher home values, and more social services.
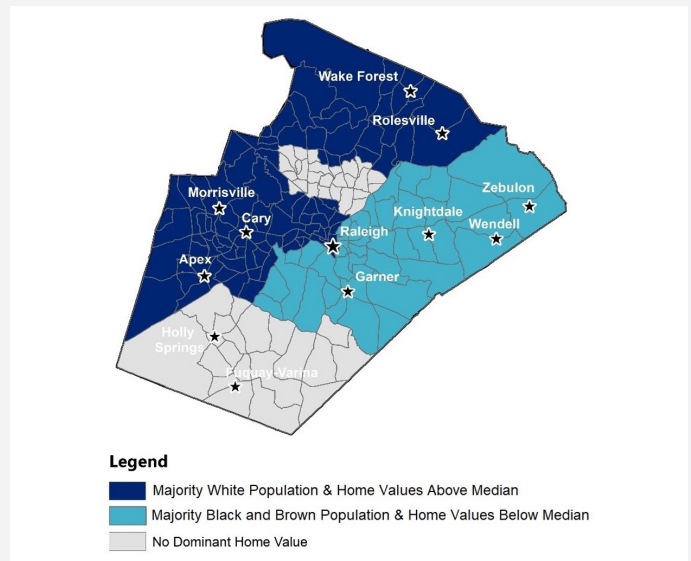
In Wake County, the median home value for residences less than 10 acres is $300,188 (March 2021). Figure 13 shows that home values are highest (above the median) in parts of the county where the majority of the population is White and lowest (below the median) in parts of the county with higher populations of Black and Brown residents.

Home Mortgage Application Approval

In the United States, home ownership is the most common way for individuals to build wealth, and Black residents have struggled with generations of discrimination in home lending. This has effects beyond intergenerational wealth transfer. For example, residential assets are often required and used as collateral for business loans, making it difficult for non-homeowners to obtain a loan and start a business.

The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act requires certain financial institutions to make mortgage information publicly available. In 2019, over 45,000 home loans were approved in Wake County, but there were wide racial disparities in loan approvals and rates of denial, as seen in Figure 14. Despite making up over 20% of the population, Black residents received less than 10% of the home loans approved in 2019, and they were more than twice as likely to be denied a home loan as a White applicant.

Figure 13. Race and Ethnicity with Home Values in Wake County, 2019

Legend
- Majority White Population & Home Values Above Median
- Majority Black and Brown Population & Home Values Below Median
- No Dominant Home Value

Source: 2015 - 2019 American Community Survey Population Data Wake County Parcels (March 2021)

Figure 14. Home Mortgage Approvals and Application Denial Rates in Wake County, 2019
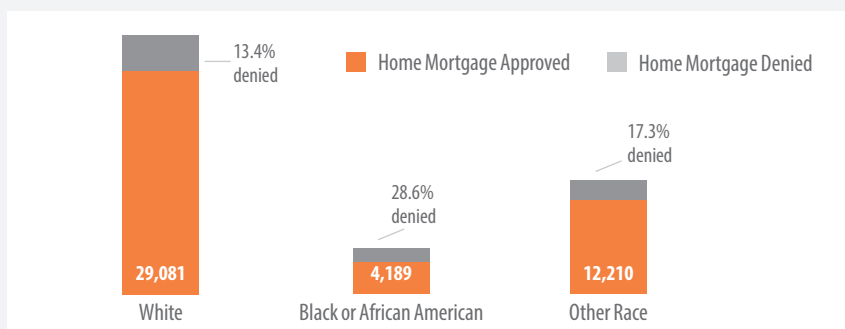
Source: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, 2019. Other Race includes Asian, multiracial, and race not disclosed.

Communities of color face structural barriers in access to healthcare, including health insurance and physical access to quality care, which is reflected in health outcomes. Non-White residents, particularly Hispanic or Latino residents, have the highest uninsured rates, and Black residents have a lower life expectancy than White residents. This is compounded by the concentration of poor health outcomes in neighborhoods in various parts of the county, including in higher population density areas such as east Raleigh and lower density areas such as northeast Wake near Zebulon and Wendell.

Access to Healthcare

In 2019, 8.4% of Wake County residents were without health insurance, below state and national averages.[12] However, there were wide disparities across race and ethnicity as seen in Figure 15: 30% of Hispanic or Latino residents had no health insurance in 2019, including over 41% of the working-age population between 19 and 64 years old. Black residents were uninsured at a rate of 10%, above the county average, whereas White and Asian residents fell below the county average.

Figure 15. **Percentage of Wake County Population Without Health Insurance Coverage, 2019**

Race and Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino	Black or African American	White, Non-Hispanic	Asian
30%	10%	7%	6%
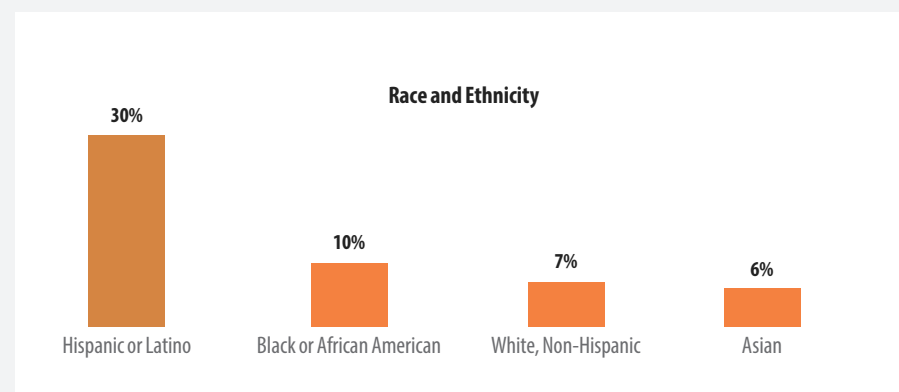
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Averages.

In 2020, widespread job losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted access to employer-based health insurance, but research from the Kaiser Family Foundation noted that it is unlikely the percentage of people uninsured changed significantly during the pandemic for two reasons: many of the jobs lost in low-wage industries did not provide insurance, and some of the loss of employer-based coverage may have been covered by Medicaid and new enrollment in 2021 Affordable Care Act (ACA) exchanges.[13]

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12 In 2019, the uninsured rate was 11.3% in North Carolina and 9.2% in the United States.
13 McDermott, D., Cox, C., Rudowitz, R., & Garfield, R. (2020, December 9). How has the pandemic affected health coverage in the U.S.? Kaiser Family Foundation. https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/how-has-the-pandemic-affected-health-coverage-in-the-u-s/

Health Outcomes: Life Expectancy

Historic inequities in health access and outcomes result in varying life expectancies for different races and ethnicities. Areas with low life expectancy are correlated with the racial and ethnic makeup of the community, as seen in Figure 16. Tracts with low life expectancies (less than 80.3 years) and high populations of Black and Brown residents (greater than 32.4%) are shown in light blue. These counties are predominantly located east and south of Raleigh.

Figure 17 shows the wide disparities in life expectancy for children of different races. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) projects a White child born in Wake County between 2017 and 2019 will have a life expectancy of 82.8 years compared with 78.2 years for a Black child, a difference of 4.6 years. Across all age cohorts, White residents have a life expectancy that is 2.8 years greater than Black residents on average. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded this disparity: in 2020, the nationwide life expectancy for Black Americans dropped by 2.7 years (compared with 1 year for the total population) driven by the disparate impact of the pandemic on Black communities.[14]

Figure 16. Life Expectancy & Black and Brown Residents in Wake County by Census Tract, 2015

Legend

Life Expectancy by Population
- Low Life Expectancy & High Black and Brown Population
- High Life Expectancy & Low Black and Brown Population
- Low Life Expectancy & Low Black and Brown Population
- High Life Expectancy & High Black and Brown Population
- No Data
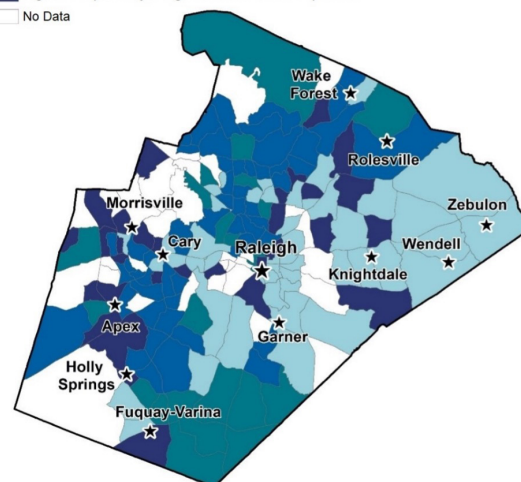
Sources:
CDC National Center for Health Statistics 2010-2015
2011-2015 American Community Survey Population Data

Figure 17. Life Expectancy and Race by Age Cohort in Wake County: 2017-2019

Source: NC DHHS 2017–2019. https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/lifexpectancy/2017-2019/Wake%20County%202017-2019%20Life%20Expectancies.html

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14 Tavernise, S., & Goodnough, A. (2021, February 18). A grim measure of Covid's toll: Life expectancy drops sharply in the U.S. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/18/us/covid-life-expectancy.html?searchResultPosition=4

TAKEAWAYS AND CONCLUSIONS

Wake County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States, and it is becoming increasingly diverse. In 2019, Residents of Color (i.e., Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Multiracial, and other) make up over 40% of Wake County's population, with Asian and Hispanic/Latino being the fastest growing population groups over the preceding decade. The county's economy is growing and has a high quality of life, but wide racial and ethnic disparities remain in health, education, criminal justice, and economic opportunity.

This initial data assessment sets the stage for development of the blueprint to address systemic racism. As RTI, the DEI Alliance, Wake County, and their partners work to build the blueprint, the data will help to guide how the groups address these challenges. There are still many additional factors to consider. Given the wide disparities revealed by the data, the following are a starting place for the working groups:

➔ Of the county's Hispanic/Latino population, 30% do not have health insurance. This figure is over 40% for working-age adults.

➔ A Black child born in Wake County has an estimated life expectancy 4 years shorter than a White child.

➔ Black students make up over half of school suspensions, despite representing 22% of the school-age population. Black and Hispanic students combined account for three-quarters of school suspensions.

➔ Statewide, 51% of the incarcerated population is Black despite constituting only 21% of the state's population. Access to criminal justice data at the county level is limited.

➔ In 2020, over half of Black and Hispanic/Latino elementary school students attended Title 1 schools compared with 18% of White students.

➔ In 2019, the Black unemployment rate in Wake County was 7.3% compared with a White unemployment rate of 3.1%—despite consistent improvement since 2012, it was still higher than White unemployment at the worst of the Great Recession.

➔ Black and Hispanic/Latino residents have a lower median household income and are disproportionately in low-wage jobs. These low-wage jobs were hit the hardest by the 2020 pandemic and unemployment crisis, and in January 2021 the number of low-wage jobs was nearly 24% lower than 1 year earlier.

➔ Despite making up over 20% of the population, Black homebuyers received less than 10% of the mortgage loans approved in Wake County in 2019 and had a rejection rate that was more than twice the rate of White mortgage applicants.

The COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis exacerbated many of these inequities. In 2020, the nationwide life expectancy for Black Americans dropped by 2.7 years (compared with 1 year for the total population) driven b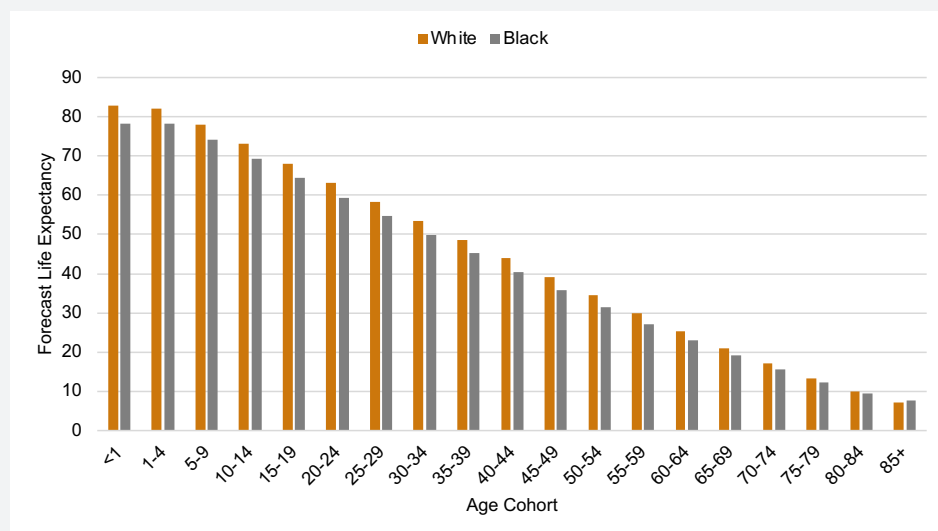y the disparate impact of the pandemic on Black communities. Low-wage jobs disproportionately held by people of color declined by nearly 24%, compared with just 1% for high-wage jobs.

The racial and ethnic disparities in education, health, criminal justice, and economic opportunity are closely interrelated. Inequities in educational opportunity affect future earnings potential. School suspensions and juvenile referrals are closely related to adult criminal justice outcomes. Stable housing and homeownership contribute to intergenerational wealth and access to education, health outcomes, and jobs. As the data show, wide racial and ethnic disparities persist in health, education, criminal justice, and economic opportunity. None of these phenomena are isolated incidents. As the committees move forward with the blueprint development, it will be important to understand how these components are interrelated and how to impact them.

Appendix B:
Organizations and People Involved

More than 50 individuals representing Wake County, North Carolina–based organizations, a group of national advisors, and a team of RTI International staff worked together to facilitate, inform, and determine the goals and actions important for Wake County to dismantle systemic racism. Wake County Government, Duke Energy, the City of Raleigh, the Raleigh Chamber, and the Triangle Diversity, Equity, & Inclusivity Alliance (the DEI Alliance) generously funded this work, which made this process and the products of this Blueprint possible. The individuals and organizations that contributed to and funded this work are listed below.

WORKING GROUPS

The Blueprint represents the ideas, insights, and commitment from participating individuals and organizations that comprised the four working groups. Their individual and collective input resulted in priorities and action items described in the Blueprint. The DEI Alliance and RTI thank the working group members for their time, commitment, and dedication to this process.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
Daryl Atkinson	Forward Justice	Co-Director
Sonia Barnes	North Carolina Black Women Empowerment Network	Founder and President
Lawrence Cameron	McGuire Woods	Partner
Whitney Fairbanks	NC Courts	Deputy Director and General Counsel
Lorrin Freeman	Wake County	District Attorney
Dennis Gaddy	Community Success Initiative, and Second Chance Alliance	Founder and Executive Director
Rick Glazier	NC Justice Center	Executive Director
Donald Pinchback	North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Juvenile Justice	Chief Court Counselor
Rev. Frank White	Antioch Bible Fellowship Church	Pastor and Community Advocate

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
Marchell Adams-David	City of Raleigh	City Manager
Verna Best	Wake County	Social and Economic Vitality Program Manager
Nannette Bowler	Wake Health & Human Services	Director
Katrece Boyd	Small Business Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at North Carolina State University	General Business Counselor
Marty Clayton	Duke Energy	District Manager
Kevin Dick	Carolina Small Business Development Fund	President & Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
David Ellis	Wake County	County Manager
Michael Haley	Wake County Economic Development/ Raleigh Chamber	Executive Director
Yvette Holmes	Southeast Raleigh Promise	CEO
Lorena McDowell	Wake County, Department of Housing Affordability & Community Revitalization	Director
Joe Milazzo	Regional Transportation Alliance	Executive Director
Virginia Parker	Bank of America	Senior Vice President
Kevin Price	National Institute of Minority Economic Development	President & CEO
Scott Ralls	Wake Tech Community College	President
Cindy Sink	Capital Area Food Network	Independent Consultant
Tom White	North Carolina State University – Economic Development Partnership	Director
Lee Worsley	Triangle J Council of Governments	Executive Director

EDUCATION EQUITY

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
Ashley Cagle	Wake County Economic Development	Assistant Executive Director
Allison Goff Clark	The Hunt Institute	Deputy Director of NC Programs
Ashley Gaddy	Ashley Gaddy Enterprises	Founder
Gayle Headen	Wake Smart Start	Executive Director
Duane Holder	Wake County, Office of the County Manager	Deputy County Manager/Chief Community Health & Vitality Officer
Latoya Montague	Communities in Schools of Wake	Executive Director
Matthew Poslusny	Meredith College	Senior Vice President and Provost
Keith Poston	WakeEd Partnership	President
Brian Ralph	William Peace University	President
Nicole Reaves	Wake Technical Community College	Executive Vice President and Chief Program Officer
Rodney Trice	Wake County Public Schools	Former Assistant Superintendent for Equity Affairs

HEALTH EQUITY

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
Bahby Banks	Pillar Consulting	CEO
Nannette Bowler	Wake Health & Human Services	Director
Cheala Garland-Downey	Alliance Behavioral Healthcare	Senior Vice President
Anita Hoggard		Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Leader
Wesley Knepper		Senior Vice President of Quality Management
Rob Robinson		CEO
Angelo Moore	Duke Raleigh Hospital	Program Manager for the Office of Health Equity
Anne Rollins	Poe Center	Executive Director
Katherine Williams	Wake County Cooperative Extension	County Extension Director

NATIONAL ADVISORS

National advisors met to relay insights and experiences from other communities and research around the country working to dismantle systemic racism.

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
Stephanie Hawkins	RTI International	Director, Transformative Research Unit for Equity
Michael Huber	Indianapolis Chamber	CEO
Marisol Jiménez	Tepeyac Consulting	Founder
JaNay Queen Nazaire	PSG and PolicyLink	Senior Advisor and Fellow
David Williams	Opportunity Insights and High Opportunity Neighborhood Partners	Director of Policy Outreach

FUNDERS

This work was possible through the generous funding of Wake County Government, Duke Energy, the City of Raleigh, the Raleigh Chamber, and the DEI Alliance.

RTI STAFF

RTI provided strategy development, facilitation, data support, and topical expertise to structure and inform the Blueprint process. RTI was responsible for delivering the final Blueprint document and corresponding data dashboard for the DEI Alliance and its partners.

NAME	CENTER	TITLE
Sara Lawrence	Center for Applied Economics and Strategy	Project Director
Sara VanLear	Center for Applied Economics and Strategy	Co-Facilitator and Lead, Economic Mobility
Megan Comfort	Youth, Violence Prevention, and Community Justice	Co-Lead, Criminal Justice
Yamanda Wright	Youth, Violence Prevention, and Community Justice	Co-Lead, Criminal Justice
Jay Feldman	Research, Evaluation, and Equity in Education	Lead, Education Equity
Phillip Graham	Center on Social Determinants, Risk Behaviors, and Prevention Science	Lead, Health Equity
Michael Hogan	Center for Applied Economics and Strategy	Lead, Data Analyst and Dashboard Developer
Kibri Hutchison Everett	Research Computing	Lead, Geographic Information Systems

Appendix C:
Blueprint Goals and Action Items by Focus Area

Between June and November 2021, the working groups identified the immediate and short-term goals in each of the four topic areas: criminal justice, economic mobility, education equity, and health equity. The action items summarized in this appendix reflect the working groups' ideas as of December 2021. These items are expected to evolve rapidly with implementation underway in early 2022.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Goals and actions are directed toward systems change that specifically impacts Black and Brown residents of Wake County, North Carolina.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Pipeline to Prison	
Goal 1: Re-envision school safety, and the perception of safety, to re-establish schools as educational institutions, and not punitive places for Black and Brown children.	**Immediate**
	1. Review the Department of Justice Task Force on Equity and Policing to determine alignment for action for the Blueprint.
	2. Create school safety plans that include student advocates, principals, administrators, and parents to determine solutions for school safety.
	3. Determine access to peer mediation and other diversion options across Wake County for all children/families to access.
	4. Explore best practice models for appropriate levels of police presence, if any, in schools. Assess whether and how these models work; how they can be adapted; and whether resource reallocation has led to positive outcomes for students, schools, and the community.
	Short-Term
	5. Revise Wake County school policies that require law enforcement involvement in response to student actions to focus on those that present the highest risk to school safety (e.g., student weapon possession) versus low-risk behaviors.
	6. Determine policies that reimagine police presence and role in schools (i.e., for safety against external threats to students).
	7. End the practice of arrests and referrals to law enforcement for common adolescent behaviors.
	8. Create talking points that support and advance the goal of re-envisioning school safety.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Pipeline to Prison	
Goal 2: Create, test, and scale alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices that disproportionately affect students of color in the Wake County Public School System.	**Immediate** 1. Develop countywide restorative justice programs that provide alternatives to exclusionary practices in schools (for example, school suspensions are a last resort). 2. Establish a school justice partnership that includes court system representation, law enforcement representation, and youth mental health professionals to reduce students' juvenile system involvement. 3. Determine what data exist and what data are needed on school offense types leading to suspensions and leading to law enforcement intervention. Prioritize racially disaggregated, school-level offense type data to inform school-based and districtwide decisions. **Short-Term** 4. Increase training on in-school discipline, youth development (developmentally appropriate actions/reactions), and racial/ethnic and implicit bias for everyone involved in schools and interacting with children. Training should include support for teachers to react to students based on what is developmentally appropriate conduct. 5. Include suspension rate (disaggregated by race and ethnicity) in measures of school performance.
Law Enforcement	
Goal 3: Reallocate resources to better address public safety and violence prevention and reduce resources that penalize people of color for administrative and nonviolent offenses.	**Immediate** 1. Recruit a law enforcement representative to join the working group, review goals, and help inform actions and data. 2. Determine data needs at the zip code level to identify trends and community needs. Increase efforts for data sharing across agencies (e.g., law enforcement, adult probation, juvenile justice). 3. Use data (especially through practices deployed during COVID) to communicate effectiveness of focusing traffic arrests and tickets on moving violations (e.g., speeding) vs. non-moving violations (e.g., fee payments) to demonstrate effectiveness in reducing bias. **Short-Term** 4. Focus tickets and arrests for moving vehicle violations that impact public safety (e.g., speeding). De-emphasize tickets and arrests for fees, titles, and other non-moving regulation violations. 5. Build political will and community advocacy to support local law enforcement changes.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Law Enforcement	
Goal 4: Improve relationship between law enforcement and Black and Brown residents of Wake County.	**Immediate**
	1. Determine whether there are current organizations, university law centers, or others that are tracking best practices to inform the working groups.
	2. Review State Bill (SB) 300 for key policies to incorporate into implementation actions, such as tracking officers who have credibility issues and incidents of use of force.
	3. Find out whether there are quality assurance personnel who review performance of law enforcement officials (internal affairs/Human Resources).
	Short-Term
	4. Enhance screening and recruitment process to determine whether someone has repeat issues in other law enforcement positions in other jurisdictions.
	5. Revise qualifications for law enforcement recruitment, hiring, and training/professional development (i.e., mental health screening and evaluations prior to academy entrance).
	6. Develop community policing philosophy and plan, and revise use of force policies.
Goal 5: Create a Community Response Department of trained medical and mental health and social work professionals.	1. Connect with Raleigh Acorns, Alliance, Raise the Age, and other organizations to determine the network of organizations best positioned to advance this goal and how this effort can support it.
Criminal Justice System and Courts	
Goal 6: Identify and address (historically and prospectively) ways in which poverty and/or lack of income create unintended and unfair collateral consequences for Black and Brown residents involved in the criminal justice system.	**Immediate**
	1. Determine options to change the law that requires judges to justify a waiver in writing to eliminate obstacles that result from high volume of cases and the publication of judges' waivers, which discourage their use.
	2. Review Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and insurance processes to determine ways to reduce DMV and insurance cost barriers (secondary series of barriers to drive again once license is reinstated). For example, are there examples of collective insurance plans where individuals buy in to get affordable rates when they are documented as an "at-risk" driver?
	Short-Term
	3. Develop best practice to assess ability to pay prior to imposition of court costs and fees, and outline steps to assess ability to pay fees for judges to understand and implement in the courtroom.
	4. Court officials work with the North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center to undertake a mass debt relief project for individuals whose drivers' licenses are revoked because of failure to pay fines.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Criminal Justice System and Courts	
Goal 7: Prioritize public safety resources to address violent crime.	**Immediate** 1. Create a local collaborative task force to address violence through violence prevention programs that focus on community support and behavioral health services. Identify interested members, and understand Durham's existing effort to build from its model. 2. Review data from Raleigh Police Department Acorn project to understand diversion trends and current success. Work closely with Raleigh Acorns and others to develop a process for pre-charge diversion for certain behavioral health conduct. **Short-Term** 3. Expand use of advanced supervised release through training of prosecutors and court officials with training and implementation guide. Define success metrics and monitor progress.
Goal 8: Identify policies and practices within the criminal justice system that add to the overrepresentation of and disparate outcomes for people of color, and promote evidence-based solutions to reduce criminal justice system disparities.	**Immediate** 1. Collect and analyze data on charges arising out of interactions with law enforcement, including resist, delay, obstruct, and assault on law enforcement to identify bias or overuse of these offenses. 2. Collect and analyze data on criminal justice outcomes for people of color. Identify racial and ethnic disparities. 3. Identify successes and barriers to court officials working with the North Carolina Pro Bono Resource Center in efforts to expunge convictions for "doughnut hole" youth. **Short-Term** 4. Identify disparities in data analysis of charges and criminal outcomes and their contributing factors, and devise strategies to address any issues identified.
Data Transparency	
Goal 9: Establish transparent baseline data, ongoing data collection, and data publication on demographics at each point on the criminal justice system continuum.	**Immediate** 1. Work with law enforcement and court system representatives to establish data collection and reporting procedures. Include data on law enforcement, court representatives, and the population involved in the criminal justice system.

Goals and actions are directed toward systems change that specifically impacts Black and Brown residents of Wake County.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Affordable Housing	
Goal 1: Reduce barriers to accessing affordable housing for people of color with prior evictions and minor criminal offenses on record.	**Immediate** 1. Identify and research best practices related to opportunities for eviction prevention (to create or expand an existing program of counseling, mediation, mitigation funds, or landlord engagement). Look to Durham program as an example to work with court system on expunging minor criminal offenses (https://www.deardurham.org/County of Durham). **Short-Term** 2. Assess local barriers for households with prior evictions and criminal offenses (e.g., the length of time that evictions stay on criminal and credit records). 3. Begin conversations with court officials in Wake County about potential opportunities to reduce evictions for people with minor criminal offenses.
Goal 2: Increase pathways for wealth-building for people of color through creation of, and access to, affordable rental and homeownership opportunities including new homeownership and homeownership retention.	**Immediate** 1. Catalog and assess existing programs in Wake County that support wealth-building, pathways to homeownership, and pathways to maintain homeownership (especially through property tax increases). 2. Conduct research on areas where potential displacement is occurring/may occur. Research states that have property tax relief programs and policies that assist longtime homeowners of color. Engage Triangle J Council of Governments (TJCOG) on its existing work and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners as a potential partner. **Short-Term** 3. Identify collective program gaps and challenges to programs in support of homeownership pathways. Organize a task force to devise a strategy to support existing programs and initiate new efforts if needed. 4. Assess housing preservation programs that provide urgent repair assistance for homeowners of color, including accessibility and energy efficiency upgrades, and brainstorm ways to increase access to programs.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Affordable Housing	
Goal 3: Engage in countywide discussions on use of data to determine homeownership, land retention and acquisition, and affordable rental development strategies.	**Immediate** 1. Research how data are currently being collected and what data are available and how they are being used. 2. Research best practice examples for potential models to consider alternative options for affordable housing designations. **Short-Term** 3. Examine opportunity to regionalize effort through TJCOG's Regional Data Center (other local governments across region need the same data). Balance the need for customized local data with benefit of regional and cumulative data. 4. Develop a potential model for regional data collection and sharing.
Goal 4: Increase involvement of community members in decision-making about affordable housing strategies, including land retention and acquisition for affordable housing development and affordable housing ownership and rental options, without overburdening community members.	**Immediate** 1. Engage with Wake County municipality staff to learn more about the Affordable Housing Committee to promote and support community engagement efforts in neighborhoods where proposed developments are located. **Short-Term** 2. Develop better strategies to engage effectively with communities.
Goal 5: Develop an equitable Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) proposal to influence how low-income housing tax credit applications are scored and funded.	**Immediate** 1. TJCOG will engage local housing practitioners through the regional housing practitioners' group to discuss existing barriers within the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency QAP. 2. Research similar or neighboring states' QAPs to identify best practices to overcome existing QAP barriers. **Short-Term** 3. TJCOG will develop an action plan to advocate for changes.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Affordable Housing	
Goal 6: Support Black and Brown landowners along bus rapid transit (BRT) and commuter rail corridors to determine the best personalized options for anticipated land price and tax value escalation from transit service improvements.	**Immediate** 1. City of Raleigh will summarize current efforts, challenges, successes, and opportunities from the City's ongoing equitable development and transit initiative, with initial focus on New Bern Avenue BRT corridor. **Short-Term** 2. City of Raleigh, in concert with nearby municipalities (e.g., Garner, Cary, Morrisville), can review other proposed high transit investment corridors, with an emphasis on areas with low- to moderate-income households and areas with significant home/landowners of color, and apply lessons learned from New Bern Avenue corridor experience. 3. Encourage or require community outreach efforts to existing owners to design and participate in development along transit corridors. Incorporate and respond to feedback in projects seeking land use approval. 4. Create an educational campaign for homeowners with information about predatory acquisition. Communicate options for refinancing and reducing cost of debt, rehabilitation programs, and tax relief. 5. Explore options and models to create a community land trust. 6. For owners interested in maximizing a profit from their asset, support owners in understanding the value of their asset and ensure that they receive competitive market offers. Educate owners on opportunities to partner in investments to capitalize on their property. This may include redevelopment, rental, or commercial. Consider working with local housing counseling agencies or, Community Development Academies, for program deployment. 7. Create greater opportunities for wealth building by increasing homeownership, investment, and business presence for people of color along transit corridors.
Transportation and Access to Jobs	
Goal 7: Support extension of current pandemic transit fare suspensions into permanent zero fare transit policy regionwide.	**Immediate** 1. Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) will commission a study during winter 2022 that summarizes current efforts in Wake County and nationally, along with implementation recommendations, in an updated study and report. **Short-Term** 2. City of Raleigh will use current pandemic transit and paratransit fare suspensions to understand the greatest opportunities to address community needs and increase transit and paratransit utilization to inform recommendations for permanent and sustainable local and regional fare strategies. 3. RTA and partners will advocate for zero fare transit as a core equity-based transportation policy regionwide.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Transportation and Access to Jobs	
Goal 8: Create a regional transportation and housing vision and plan, with affordability and equitable development as primary pillars of the initiative.	**Immediate** 1. RTA will coordinate with TJCOG and other partners on outline of potential regional planning effort potentially commencing during 2022. 2. RTA commits to help fund and support the proposed multiyear planning effort coordinated by TJCOG involving transportation, housing, and related infrastructure. **Short-Term** 3. TJCOG will elevate principles of equity and affordability in study and outreach efforts across all communities. The study initiative and deliverables will incorporate and build upon existing efforts and will not usurp local control or priorities.
Workforce Development	
Goal 9: Create more registered apprenticeships that are industry and Department of Labor recognized. Create more opportunities to earn while you learn for students. Scholarships are not enough (e.g., students need access to childcare, food security, affordable housing, affordable transit).	**Immediate** 1. Recruit additional employers to become members of the North Carolina Triangle Apprenticeship Program. 2. Contact employers from nontraditional apprenticeship sectors (e.g., computer technology, automotive, emergency medical services [EMS]) to gauge interest. **Short-Term** 3. Assess Wake County's willingness to consider a "Wake Works" countywide initiative for adults.
Goal 10: Increase access to local workforce development and skills training initiatives.	**Immediate** 1. Target most vulnerable Wake County geographic areas for increased promotion of available programs. **Short-Term** 2. Identify and assess leading barriers preventing interested participants from accessing local workforce development and skills training initiatives. 3. Consider expanding workforce development programs beyond currently targeted Title 1 high schools (4).

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Worker Pay	
Goal 11: Identify and target industries that have increased opportunities for upward mobility.	**Immediate** 1. Conduct virtual learning session with Brookings Institute to learn more about the Opportunities Industries research. This learning session would also include how other communities are implementing this work and metrics and impacts to date. **Short-Term** 2. Identify and overlay current known efforts in Wake County that align with the Brookings Opportunity Industries research to better understand current efforts and resources.
Goal 12: Increase percentage of jobs that pay a living wage by supporting living wage certification programs for business.	**Immediate** 1. Perform data analysis to determine the current percentage of people making a living wage (by industry, occupation, gender, race, and ethnicity). **Short-Term** 2. Perform data analysis (and/or metanalysis) to determine the metrics necessary to create a living wage standard for Wake County. This would include a review of current models employed by Wake County Government and other local groups to define a living wage.
Goal 13: Identify and share emerging or promising best practices and policies for changing business models to provide more living wages.	**Immediate** 1. Identify examples of companies (local company examples preferred) that have implemented a living wage or equitable wage standards for employees. These examples can be from private, public, and nonprofit firms. **Short-Term** 2. Identify programs that help businesses support shifts to living wage or equitable wage standards across various industry sectors/subsectors and firm size (microbusiness, small business, large enterprise). This would include policies, emerging practices, and models that can be shared.
Small Business	
Goal 14: Increase government and corporate procurement spending with businesses owned by people of color.	**Immediate** 1. Create a campaign to encourage the top 100 companies in the county to commit to spending 10% of their procurement dollars with minority businesses. **Short-Term** 2. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to run the campaign.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Small Business	
Goal 15: Prepare business owners of color for contracting opportunities.	**Immediate** 1. Increase the number of Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) in the county registered with the federal government System for Award Management (SAM) and North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System as well as those that have government certifications. **Short-Term** 2. Follow on the heels of the state economic development task force and develop a mentor-protege program to ensure that HUBs are prepared to step into contracting opportunities. Mentors will include the top 100 companies committed to increasing their procurement spend. 3. Partner with government contracting assistance programs (like the United Minority Contractors of North Carolina, North Carolina Government Contracting Assistance Program, and Infinity Bridges) to create awareness about certification and provide support in getting minority owners certified. Connect mentors with these organizations for additional support.
Goal 16: Ensure that Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) have access to entrepreneurial support resources.	**Immediate** 1. Develop a process to identify gaps and missed opportunities for HUBs to gain access to and awareness of entrepreneurial support resources. **Short-Term** 2. Partner with state-funded entrepreneurial support organizations (ESOs) like the Small Business and Technology Development Center, Small Business Center, and Women's Business Center to create HUB-focused education and counseling task forces that will help to identify and serve the specific needs of minority small business owners. This does not have to be limited to state-funded ESOs. 3. Encourage corporations to invest in Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) so they have resources to support minority-owned businesses.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Banking, Credit, and Debt Relief	
Goal 17: Reimagine bankability (personal and business banking) to reduce the racial and ethnic bias in financial institutions' banking practices, including financial planning, lending, and investment services for people and businesses of color.	**Immediate** 1. Learn more about how to make CDFIs a more accessible banking option, building off knowledge of the existing institutions that administer CDFI funds, including the 3 in Wake Co. and 7 in Durham Co. 2. Determine models for banks to audit lending practices to determine current practices that may create lending disparities. **Short-Term** 3. Create and/or amplify and scale existing efforts to help people understand their credit scores and when to make credit inquiries (including what kind of debt to apply for) to support a healthy balance of cash/debt (especially for small business/startup). 4. Create and/or scale training for CDFIs and bank representatives to guide applicants about credit/debt options. 5. Ask banks to audit for bias and document.
Goal 18: Relieve financial burdens and debt to better position workers to take advantage of economic mobility opportunities.	**Immediate** 1. Wake Tech will explore existing debt relief programs and financial options and research what organizations support college planning and access to funds (i.e., College Foundation of North Carolina) to decipher policy options for debt forgiveness. 2. Determine financial literacy curriculum in primary schools that teach options about scholarships, grants, and other ways to reduce costs of higher education. **Short-Term** 3. Determine and advocate for policies to reduce student debt.
Goals 19: Simplify systems and processes for debt relief to better connect people to existing programs.	**Immediate** 1. Research feasibility of debt relief as an employer benefit similar to healthcare flexible spending accounts (e.g., a non-taxed account in which money goes directly into debt relief account so that payment goes further to lower debt). **Short-Term** 2. Determine appropriate policies and advocate for them to be adopted.

Goals and actions are directed toward systems change that specifically impacts
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CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Cultural Competency of Educators	
Goal 1: Equip and prepare existing and new teachers and administrators with racial equity resources, professional development, racial bias training, and support to imbed racial equity and cultural competency in student content, teaching methods, and teaching practices.	**Immediate** 1. Explore how North Carolina schools of education teach cultural competence and anti-racism in pre-service educator programs. 2. Understand how/whether the county assesses cultural competency in new hires. **Short-Term** 3. Leverage resources across the district/county to ensure that educators are receiving cultural competency training. Identify times during the work week when teachers can receive this training. 4. Determine recommendations on how to track and assess anti-racism and cultural competency content imbedded in classroom content and practices.
Goal 2: Include racial equity and cultural competency evaluation criteria within recruitment and hiring processes.	**Immediate** 1. Investigate partnering with Wake Tech Community College (teacher assistant program) and other universities to enhance educator diversity pipeline. **Short-Term** 2. Identify the racial, ethnic, and origin characteristics of the student body, and set goals to recruit and hire teachers and administrators who reflect these characteristics. 3. Collaborate with educators to draft guidance on how to include racial equity and cultural competency criteria in recruitment and hiring processes.
Goal 3: Revise educator evaluation to include cultural responsiveness and inclusion into school climate evaluation.	**Immediate** 1. Amplify talking points and information that supports educators as they discuss critical race theory, including a glossary that supports building awareness, fluency, and shared understanding. **Short-Term** 2. Work with educators to create an addendum to Standard II of the North Carolina teacher evaluation rubric that provides examples of how to incorporate cultural responsiveness and inclusion in the classroom. Link to state standards and rubrics when possible.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Cultural Competency of Educators	
Goal 4: Work directly with Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), including district and school board, to review curriculum and instruction practices for diverse student populations.	**Immediate** 1. Connect with district lead or committee lead to determine how WCPSS reviews curricula and instructional practices to meet the needs of a diverse student population.
Goal 5: Use instructional practices that sustain the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of multilingual students and students of color.	**Immediate** 1. Connect with district leaders and other advocates to amplify existing efforts. Explore potential synergies with the Dudley Flood Center and the Center for Racial Equity in Education (James Ford) to develop agreed upon shared language, literacies, and cultural practices for multilingual and students of color. **Short-Term** 2. Collaborate with educators to develop a shared language and practice that sustains the languages, literacies, and cultural practices of multilingual students and students of color.
Mental Health	
Goal 6: Prioritize school-based mental health training, providers, and support staff in budget planning, including equipping instructors and administrators who interact with students the most each day.	**Short-Term** 1. Amplify schools' budget requests for resources to support students' mental health. 2. Advocate for the prioritization of trauma-informed care and specialists when hiring/training mental health providers.
Goal 7: Provide mental health support for teachers, administrators, and staff.	**Short-Term** 3. Amplify schools' budget requests for resources to support teachers', administrators', and staffs' mental health.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Pipeline to Prison	
Goal 8: Reform the role of police in schools.	**Immediate** 1. Determine access to peer mediation and other diversion options across Wake County for all children/families (current access disparities exist). **Short-Term** 2. Determine (and enact) policies that reimagine police presence and role in schools (i.e., for safety against external threats to student safety, not actively involved in student/instructor/administration discipline) 3. End the practice of arrests and referrals to law enforcement for common adolescent behaviors in order to change direction of discipline in schools from a focus on extraction and correction to one of learning and supportive change. 4. Revise Wake County school policies about what student actions require law enforcement involvement and focus action of higher risk to school safety, such as student weapon possession). 5. Create school safety plans that include student advocates, principals, and administrators as student advocates and opportunities to build community (parental) capacity to determine solutions. 6. Create talking points (and/or mirror community advocacy messages) regarding police presence in schools. As a part of the message creation, explore places where new models for police presence (or the elimination of police) in schools are being implemented. Develop an understanding of how these new measures have reallocated resources to increase student/community advocates.
Goal 9: Devise effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices in WCPSS.	**Immediate** 1. Determine what data exist and what data are needed to understand school offense types that lead to suspensions and law enforcement intervention. Prioritize racially disaggregated data and school-level offense type data to help inform decision making for exclusionary discipline practices. **Short-Term** 2. Include suspension rate (disaggregated by race and ethnicity) in measures of school performance. 3. Increase training on in-school discipline, youth development (developmentally appropriate actions/reactions), and racial and implicit bias for everyone involved in schools and interacting with children. Training should include support for teachers to react to students based on what is developmentally appropriate conduct. 4. Develop countywide restorative justice programs that provide alternatives to exclusionary practices in schools (for example, school suspensions are a last resort).

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Community Engagement for Local Policy Change	
Goal 10: Educate families and the community about the power of their voices for influencing local policy for more equitable education.	**Immediate**
	1. Identify organizations actively engaging the community and families to partner with and build upon, such as the Education Justice Alliance, One Wake Family and Community Engagement Office in Wake County Public Schools, YMCA of the Triangle, and Southeast Raleigh Promise. 2. Examine aspects of Leandro case that can be used as a gateway to raise awareness about a range of issues community members can influence.
	Short-Term
	3. Develop an action plan, with an engagement and communications strategy, to host a series of community conversations. Amplify families' voices, experience, and knowledge so that their value is recognized. Demonstrate respect of families' cultural and linguistic practices and customs in engagement strategy. Include messages that counter the narrative that equity in education reduces educational opportunity for others.

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CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Healthcare Access	
Goal 1: Increase communications and marketing of healthcare resources to people of color.	**Immediate** 1. Determine whether working group goals and actions align with (and can be bolstered by) LiveWellWake. 2. Increase communication, including non-digital, in communities of color about the Wake County Medical Society Community Health Foundation list and other inventories of healthcare resources via organizations with significant reach (such as 211, NC CARES360, Radio1, Wake Network of Care) and community-based organizations with local trust and reach. **Short-Term** 3. Create partnerships with community-based organizations and community health workers who can take technology into communities. 4. Utilize new technology to increase the effectiveness of the Wake County Health and Human Services (WCHHS) Call Center to analyze health services requests, gaps, and needs. Use that information to inform the configuration and deployment of WCHHS's services plans.
Goal 2: Increase vaccine access and adoption for people of color.	**Immediate** 1. Address misinformation and confusion about the COVID-19 vaccine. Include key messages about vaccine not being a cure but rather a means to lower risk and continue low-risk behavior. Translate into multiple languages. 2. Prioritize awareness tactics through trusted people (such as staff at community-based organizations, community health workers, and local health advisors). **Short-Term** 3. Find resources to compensate health workers/advisors who can support information sharing about a variety of health needs (not just COVID). 4. Expand the use of pharmacies and clinics as a one-stop location to discuss COVID and other vaccines and health needs. 5. Expand the COVID "boot camp" with youth and adults as an effective means of increasing information through communities of color and community leaders.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Healthcare Access	
Goal 3: Increase access to mental health services for people of color.	**Immediate** 1. Explore the role of faith-based and community-based organizations in supporting families' and individuals' mental health needs. Examine current efforts with Alliance Partnership, Poe Center, and LiveWellWake. **Short-Term** 2. Expand system of care treatment strategies for adolescents, and expand school-based mental health strategies for students. 3. Increase telehealth options for adults and youth (taking advantage of additional technology and hardware distributed through the pandemic and/or hotspots to meet counselors in private). Assess families' needs to best support youth.
Goal 4: Increase access to healthy food for people of color.	**Immediate** 1. Determine percentage of those living at the federal poverty level and compare that to the percentage of the population enrolled in SNAP to determine whether SNAP is reaching the intended population. 2. Create (or leverage others') outreach to fathers/dads who take care of their families to increase their accessibility to services from which they could benefit. 3. Engage with communities of color (all races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds) to further define food access needs and formulate strategy recommendations related to the new comprehensive food plan, expected to be released in fall 2022 (Cooperative Extension and Food & Nutrition Services of Wake County). 4. Recruit volunteers who reflect the races and ethnicities of the people with food access needs, including a range of immigrant communities. 5. Continue efforts to expand client choice and to make more healthy produce, lean proteins, and dairy available through existing pantries. 6. Examine best practices for mobile food access strategies. 7. Better understand the "benefits cliff" that undermines efforts to support self-sufficiency and determine ways to address systems-level gaps. **Short-Term** 8. Create a comprehensive screening and engagement process to understand families' basic needs and ensure that enrollment and support in relevant programs is easily accessible. 9. Promote food as medicine strategies where health insurance provides supplemental access to fresh, locally sourced, nutrient dense foods. 10. Expand mobile food access strategies by exploring new ways to fund food delivery services. 11. Determine feasible strategies to expand mobile food access points by growing the capacity of organizations like the Black Farmers Market, the Black Food Hub, and the Fertile Ground Food Cooperative to expand to additional locations in underserved communities. Include an examination of the Tangelo project specifically.

CATEGORY AND GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Data	
Goal 5: Determine relevant and accurate data on health outcomes needed to hold systems accountable.	**Immediate** 1. Use zip code/block group data, by specific geographies, to engage and understand the data for specific populations and areas of Wake County. 2. Use employment and federal poverty level as systems indicators as a proxy for racism and underinvestment. Use these data to prioritize areas within Wake County for working group actions. **Short-Term** 3. Use zip code to enable targeted approach for actions and resources, such as (a) determining relative distance between where clients live to affordable primary care providers, and economic and social services, that accept Medicaid and self-pay plans; (b) plotting distance to WCHHS services based on Medicaid recipients and last FY mapping data; (c) mapping proximity of the marginalized clients to 340B participating pharmacies, and regional centers (use public transportation proximity as well); and (d) increasing the use of these data to enhance the services offered at county facilities in communities of color. 4. Work intentionally with community leaders to develop and implement health promotion, education, and outreach on comprehensive health and social care. 5. Propose ways to move away from a global view that determines a healthy Wake County as an overall average and focus on ways to address race/ethnicity disparities in health outcomes in more distinctive ways.

Blueprint to Dismantle Systemic Racism:

Wake County, North Carolina

February 2022

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