



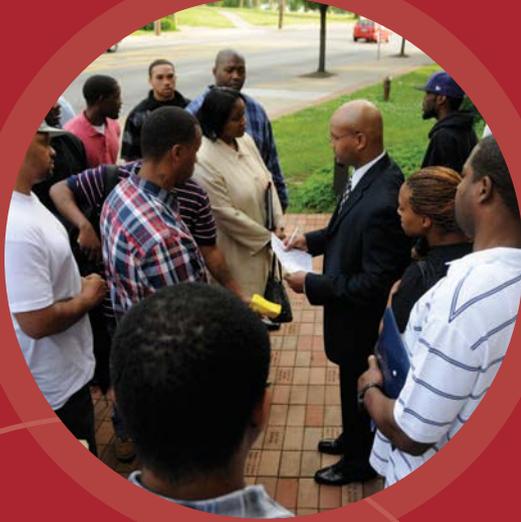
*The*  
**STATE**  
*of*  
**BLACK**

**C I N C I N N A T I**  
**2015 • TWO CITIES**



Urban League of  
Greater Southwestern Ohio

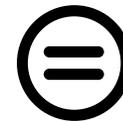
Greater Cincinnati Urban League | Miami Valley Urban League



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# THE STATE OF BLACK CINCINNATI 2015: TWO CITIES



**Greater Cincinnati**  
Urban League

A subsidiary of the  
Urban League of  
Greater Southwestern Ohio



# Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Executive Summary	v
<b>Economics</b>	
Income inequality prevents economic self-sufficiency, mobility	2
How to compute labor statistics	10
Regional growth out-pacing inclusion of black-owned business	12
Acme Wrecking’s history provides lessons in savvy, excellence	24
<b>Health</b>	
Social inequities complicate racial health disparities	28
Seeing public health in context of poor housing, other social ills	30
People most affected by disparities in health must lead corrective effort	56
Affordable Care Act will work if newly insured focus on prevention	60
<b>Education</b>	
Cincinnati Public Schools must help black students move beyond dream	64
Black students at greater risk for suspension, expulsion	71
Quality education, care before age 6 set foundation for success	79
<b>Housing</b>	
Housing segregation isolates blacks in poor, high-crime neighborhoods	86

## **Criminal Justice**

Justice system's dependence on jail, lifelong sanctions harm community	94
Ending over-incarceration trend will improve black neighborhoods	98
Returning citizens earn 40% less than before they went to prison	105

## **Inclusion**

Do terms 'inclusive,' 'conservative' mix, offer hope to African-Americans?	108
Authentic inclusion not yet achieved in corporate Cincinnati	113
Unprecedented organization, unity needed to move community ahead	116
The blueprint for inclusion: City's vitality depends on valuing all	121
Inclusion survey results	125

## **About the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio**

History and programs	134
Board of Trustees	137
Advisory Board	140
A call to action	143
Current members of Guiding Coalition	145
Acknowledgements	149



*“...racial disparities in employment, earnings, housing, safety, and inclusion hold back masses of African-Americans.”*

# FOREWORD

# Many black Cincinnatians remain second-class citizens

More than 50 years since the historic 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, too many African-Americans — nationally and in Cincinnati — continue to struggle, lagging far behind whites economically and socially.

Twenty years have passed since the Urban League of Greater Cincinnati published its last comprehensive report, “The State of Black Cincinnati: A Framework for Action,” in August 1995. Among its findings: half of black males 18-24 years of age were unemployed, and 1 in 3 black students did not graduate from high school on time. Still, the report sounded a somewhat optimistic tone, citing how social systems and laws were in place “to address these concerns and...bring about necessary change.”

Some major change did come, but at a high price, in the previous two decades.

The National Urban League stunned Greater Cincinnati by announcing in July 2002 the move of its 2003 national conference from the city. At the time, Cincinnati still reeled from violence that had torn it black from white. Police-community relations were brittle and tense. The U.S. Department of Justice had conducted investigations around patterns and practices of excessive force in Cincinnati’s police department.

Through the now-hailed Collaborative Agreement, the City of Cincinnati, its police department, committed African-American and white community leaders, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, family foundations, and large companies went through the agonizing process of holding a mirror to themselves. They saw racial disparities. These leaders wanted to improve race relations and address racial inequity by addressing both

their symptoms and causes. They worked to heal the city through an overarching process called Better Together Cincinnati.

Through the Collaborative Agreement and Better Together Cincinnati, police reforms came to pass: The community began to have a say in how neighborhoods are policed. The Community-Police Partnering Center – part of the Greater Cincinnati Urban League — now helps residents identify problems and develop neighborhood-based solutions with the police.

Other reforms built on positive energy created by improved police-community relations.

In 2003, the Minority Business Accelerator was established as result of recommendations of the Cincinnati Community Action Now Commission. Focused on reducing disparity in the region’s business community, the accelerator drives economic activity for African-American and Hispanic-owned companies and increases employment in the region’s underemployed areas. Three-dozen Goal Setter businesses and nonprofits in the larger community spent more than \$1 billion with minority companies in 2013, most in program history.

In 2006, a group of leaders from many areas came together with one goal in mind: to improve academic success in the urban core of Greater Cincinnati. That effort is called the Strive Partnership, and its tagline reveals its goal: “Every Child, Every Step of the Way, Cradle to Career.” Among its five-year achievements were a 9-percent improvement in kindergarten readiness and 10-percent growth in the high school graduation rate.

In 2011, United Way of Greater Cincinnati — in collaboration with organization partners in human services, health care, and education — announced what it calls “bold goals” for the community to reach by 2020. These goals zeroed in on decreasing poverty, increasing student performance in public schools, and reducing barriers to good health by focusing funding to member agencies whose programs focus on these issues.

Still, most notable of these civic accomplishments is Cincinnati police reforms. Political and civic leaders and police credited the Collaborative Agreement for helping Cincinnati keep the peace in the heat of this summer. Tensions stirred following the July 19 shooting death of an

unarmed black motorist, Samuel DuBose, during a traffic stop by a white University of Cincinnati Police officer.

Less than a year earlier, in August 2014, the agreement earned national praise, when protests and violence rocked Ferguson, Missouri, in wake of the shooting of an unarmed black man, Michael Brown, by a white police officer. A string of these types of incidents nationally — involving Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida; John Crawford III in a Walmart store in the Dayton, Ohio, suburb of Beavercreek; Eric Garner in Staten Island; and Walter L. Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina — illustrate how African-Americans still live largely in a country that is separate, unequal, and sometimes hostile.

While Cincinnati police reforms and other collaborations to improve social conditions have moved the community forward, racial disparities in employment, earnings, housing, safety, health, and inclusion hold back masses of African-Americans in Greater Cincinnati. Recovery from the Great Recession is

painfully slow in reaching the nation's black communities, where unemployment rates remain more than double that of whites. Student performance in predominantly black schools still is not equal to that in schools with a majority of white students.

The Greater Cincinnati Urban League's "The State of Black Cincinnati 2015: Two Cities," commands urgent attention. Disproportionately high numbers of African-Americans live lives of quiet desperation on society's margins here, voiceless, isolated in dangerous, unhealthy, and poor communities. So much work remains.

All citizens, regardless of color or economic standing, should be concerned. Cincinnati and the Tristate region will not fulfill their long-term promise as desirable places to live and do business unless these economic and social gaps between black and white are significantly closed.

*O'dell M. Owens, President, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College*



*“...we recognize that a crisis exists that needs attention.”*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Donna Jones Baker**  
President and CEO  
Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio

# City's progress has only masked racial disparities, not solved them

By Donna Jones Baker

In its 2014 “State of Black America” report, the National Urban League ranked 77 metropolitan areas across the United States by comparing median household income for whites and African-Americans.

Greater Cincinnati came in near the bottom, at number 73. Median black household was \$24,272, compared to \$57,481 for whites.

Yet this single measure only begins to tell the story of racial disparity in the region and the city of Cincinnati.

**Poverty:** Of the almost 14,000 families living in poverty in the city of Cincinnati from 2005-2009, 76 percent of them were African-American. *Page 7.*

**Minority-owned businesses:** Cincinnati stands behind peer cities in the number

of minority-owned businesses per 1,000 residents, at 6.9. The peer city average is 11.9. Austin, Texas, has 22.2 minority-owned businesses per 1,000 residents, and Raleigh, North Carolina, comes in at 18.8. *Page 17.*

**Life expectancy:** In the city of Cincinnati, African-American men live an average of 63.8 years, exactly 10 years less than white men. Black women live an average of 72.4 years, white women 79 years. Overall, rates of diseases and conditions ranging from diabetes and cancer to high blood pressure and hypertension are significantly higher for African-Americans in Cincinnati. *Pages 31, 48.*

**Infant mortality:** In the city, 12.6 black children per 1,000 live births die before the age of 1 year, compared to 6.1 for white babies. In Hamilton County, the number is dire: the infant mortality rate for black

babies is 18.4, compared to 5.5 for whites. *Pages 33, 50.*

**Where you live:** People living in low-income, predominantly black city neighborhoods have shorter average life spans than residents of affluent, predominantly white communities. For example, the life expectancy in Avondale is 68.2 years, as opposed to 85.9 years in Mount Lookout. The overall city average is 76.7 years. *Pages 33, 48.*

**Education:** Of Cincinnati Public Schools 33,000 students, 63 percent are African-American, and 73.4 percent of black students come from economically disadvantaged families. *Page 65.*

**Child poverty:** While the overall child poverty rate for children under 6 in Cincinnati is an abhorrent 52 percent — one of the highest rates for major American cities — it is an unconscionable 74 percent for its youngest African-American citizens. *Page 83.*

**Home ownership:** The rate in 15-county Greater Cincinnati is 74.5 percent for whites but 33.1 percent for African-Americans. *Page 90.*

**Mass incarceration:** Though only 12.5 percent of Ohio's population, African-Americans make up more than 45 percent of the state's incarcerated people. *Page 100.*

**Unemployment:** Rates for both African-Americans and white Americans continue to fall since the height of the Great Recession. Still, while the 2014 National Urban League report showed a 7.1-percent unemployment rate for whites in Greater Cincinnati, the black rate stood at 17.1 percent. The overall unemployment rate in Cincinnati has fallen to 4.3 percent, yet it remains in double-digits for African-Americans. *Page 109.*

This staggering list of numbers might come as a surprise to many Cincinnati and regional residents. After all, the city is undergoing a building boon at The Banks Downtown and redevelopment renaissance in Over-the-Rhine.

Yet, in the case of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, crime and poverty have not been solved — just pushed west into the neighborhoods of East Price Hill, North and South Fairmount and Westwood, locations of affordable housing. And while The Banks

has created singular regional attractions, entertainment, restaurants, and housing options, they are largely out of the reach economically for many African-Americans. It's as if black citizens live in a separate Cincinnati. And it's from this phenomenon that the Greater Cincinnati Urban League takes the name for this comprehensive report, "The State of Black Cincinnati 2015: Two Cities."

Sadly, many white citizens – especially those living or working in the suburbs – do not see our urban neighborhoods. They are not aware of the positive people and energy that exist here, even in the face of daily challenges faced by African-Americans living in Cincinnati's second city.

Our Urban League affiliate last published a report dealing solely with the state of black Cincinnati in 1995. Since then, a number of other organizations have released annual or bi-annual regional or city studies, but none has a focus on the black community.

We believe information is power. Twenty years is far too long for the Greater Cincinnati Urban League and its parent organization, the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, to go without putting

forth an exhaustive examination of the community. We need to understand our strengths and weaknesses, and we are confident that "Two Cities" reveals the true state of our community.

When we look at an unemployment rate of 17.1 percent for African-Americans within the city, we recognize that a crisis exists that needs attention. Few, if any, Americans considered an unemployment rate of more than 5 percent acceptable during the Great Recession of 2007–2009. Yet the black community here has historically bore the brunt of unemployment rates two to three times greater than those for white Americans.

Our report breaks down the disparities by subject matter, making them easier to understand. "Two Cities" shows African-Americans enduring unacceptably high unemployment and jobless rates, low high school graduation rates, high dropout rates, neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, high incarceration rates, and even higher infant mortality rates.

As difficult as this information can be to digest, for it paints a bleak portrait of black life, it is necessary for us to collect and

publish it. And it's equally important for the larger community to evaluate it and come up with strategies to bring about lasting change.

An African proverb creates a fascinating image: *When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.* We are a people in crisis, and these challenging times call for unprecedented and total cooperation from individual African-Americans and many of the Urban League's community partners. We must, too, engage the greater community. National Urban League President Marc Morial, during our 2014 national conference in Cincinnati, explained this balance: When asked why a portion of the larger population continues to blame the poor and minorities for their economic plights, Morial said, "I get asked that a lot. For the record, (critics) were wrong 40 years ago, they were wrong 20 years ago, (and) they were wrong 30 years ago. What makes a community strong is the interdependence of the people. The Urban League believes we have individual and family responsibility. But that responsibility has to be met by a community that wants to create jobs and opportunity."

In this spirit, the Greater Cincinnati Urban League has created a "Guiding Coalition" of

organizations and individuals willing to work tirelessly to decrease the overrepresentation of African-Americans in all of society's ills. The authors herein are members of our coalition. We are creating a mechanism in which anyone who wants to be part of the solution can easily find a point of entry. The findings of this report demand action, and we believe this type of coalition is a necessary first step to advance and promote positive change.

The Avondale neighborhood, the largest black community in Cincinnati and our home, is beginning what we hope is a transformation. We are part of a multi-agency partnership that secured a five-year, \$29.5 million Choice Neighborhoods grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This type of selfless collaboration is needed across the city to elevate the quality of life in other predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods. We must end damaging infighting between like-minded organizations, as well, that inhibits progress.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy, based in Washington, District of Columbia, offers a framework. The center – founded to influence public policy affecting poor

children and families, the elderly, and disabled – calls for communities to create an inclusive process. Goals must be clear, and a partnerships that includes faith leaders, nonprofits, businesses, and residents needs to be accountable to each other. Effective communication that reaches a broader audience is important to build public will and political support. Usable data that measures progress is vital; we at the Greater Cincinnati Urban League offer this report as a baseline from which to begin.

We pledge to continue our leadership role and support ongoing efforts already begun — such as legislation and initiatives that improve public education, make early childhood education available to all families, and help returning citizens who’ve paid their debt to society come home to jobs that pay a living wage. Our mission is to

transform generations by promoting personal empowerment and economic self-sufficiency.

In the end, we, as African-Americans, have come too far to stop now. We cannot tire. We owe it to future generations and to our forebears, those who struggled and sacrificed, were imprisoned, or even died to create the opportunities that are available to many of us today. We have a proud history from which to draw strength. Galvanized, we must move forward, as if living the words of the Negro spiritual, “Ain’t gonna let nobody turn me ‘roun.’”

*Donna Jones Baker is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio. It is the parent organization of the Greater Cincinnati Urban League and the Miami Valley Urban League, Dayton, Ohio.*



*“...we must also think of this gap as a widening chasm between African-Americans and whites.”*

# ECONOMICS

# Income inequality prevents economic self-sufficiency, mobility

By Wilton Blake and Jenny Laster

*It must first be recognized that income inequality knows no race, color, or nationality. For the purpose of this document, however, the focus is on the African-American community in Cincinnati.*

A 2014 report by the Pew Research Center shows that U.S. income inequality is at its highest since 1928, the year before the Great Depression started. The report continues by stating that the black-white income gap in the United States has persisted and that the difference in median household incomes between whites and blacks has grown from about \$19,000 in 1967 to roughly \$27,000 in 2011. Closer to home, an estimated 36,933 households in Cincinnati had income below the poverty level, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2013 American Community Survey. These are alarming numbers but they have little or no meaning for many of us.

Exactly what is income inequality? Is it the same as economic inequality? The only commonality is “inequality,” or unequal. We make the assumption that if we speak of income inequality, we are speaking of how evenly or unevenly income is distributed in a society. Economic inequality, while encompassing income inequality, may be considered to be the disparate distribution of wealth. We often think of this as the gap between the rich and the poor. But we must also think of this gap as the widening chasm between African-Americans and whites, especially as it relates to areas of Cincinnati with high concentrations of low-income African-American households

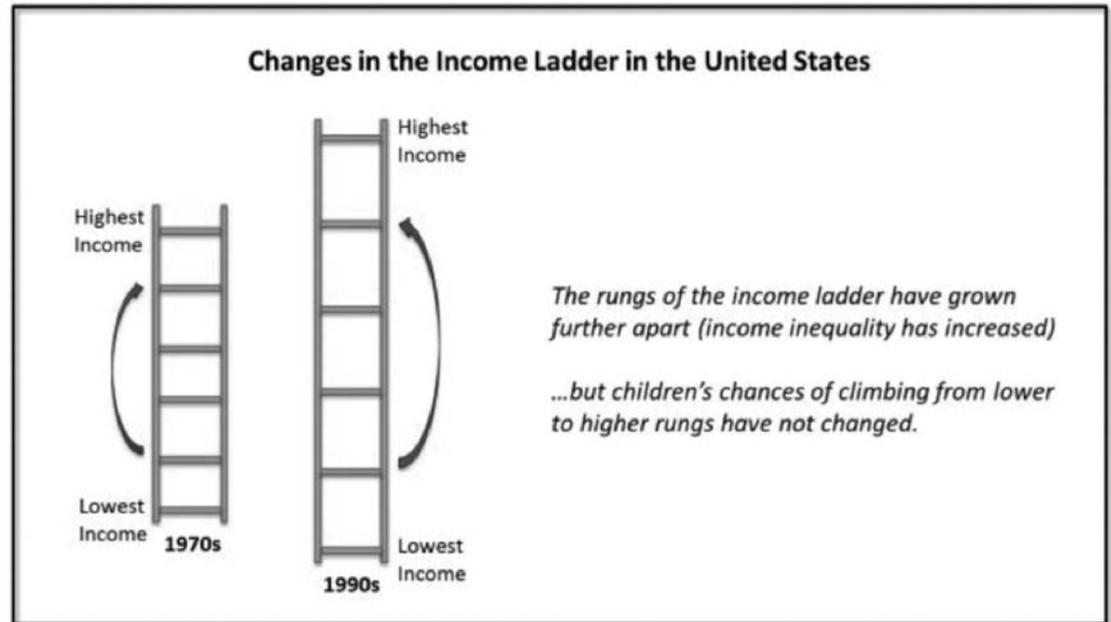
While not specific to Cincinnati, a January 23, 2014 report in The Huffington Post states the following:

“So what is it that stifles economic mobility? The researchers found that areas with higher levels of segregation,

income inequality, and more single parents tend to have worse prospects for mobility. In addition, regions with fewer social networks and poorer school systems are typically worse off.

“The one not-so-depressing finding from the report is that economic mobility hasn’t slowed over the past few decades, instead it’s pretty much stayed the same.”

That said, while a child’s chance of moving up the economic ladder hasn’t fallen, the rungs on the ladder have grown farther apart (read: the effect of income inequality has gotten a lot worse). That means kids today are more affected than ever by their parents’ economic status. This chart from The Huffington Post shows just how bad it is:



To the family struggling to make ends meet, the definitions for inequality, charts, graphs, and research pronouncements have little or no relevance. What is important to that family is sustaining the family unit in a manner that allows for basic needs to be met.

What does inequality look like? According to the Economic Policy Institute, the income a family needs in order to attain a secure yet modest living standard is based on the specific costs of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, other necessities, and taxes.

Monthly costs for a family with one parent and one child in Cincinnati-Middleton, Ohio:

Housing	\$740
Food	\$367
Child care	\$581
Transportation	\$480
Health care	\$868
Other Necessities	\$284
Taxes	\$206
Monthly Total	\$3,528
<b>Annual Total</b>	<b>\$42,331</b>

Compare the above numbers with the Poverty Guidelines as issued by the U. S.

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

2014 POVERTY GUIDELINES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	
Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,060 for each additional person.	
1	\$11,670
2	15,730
3	19,790
4	23,850
5	27,910
6	31,970
7	36,030
8	40,090

Somehow, when we equate these numbers with those provided by the Economic Policy Institute, there is an income gap of \$26,601 between its projected annual costs of \$42,331 and the U. S. Poverty Guidelines figure of \$15,730 for a family of two people.

### **Factors contributing to income inequality**

Catching up or closing the equality gap is like running in a sack race and having no sack. While your opponents are moving ahead in their respective sacks, you, on the other hand, are still at the starting line looking for either a sack of your own or someone to assist you by giving you a sack. Perhaps this image is an oversimplification, but a major factor impacting economics is the inability of society to provide gainful employment for those most affected by economic inequality. But this simple solution is complex. It would require employment opportunities where the employee received regular work and adequate payment for services.

Realistically, it is impossible to offer employment that would provide an improved quality of life or economic parity for families where the heads of households have no marketable skills. This lack of skill development is perhaps the biggest deterrent to gainful employment. Many people, especially the long-term unemployed, drop off the radar due to job-seekers giving up on the job search and dropping out of the labor force. And, when people can find

work, it isn't likely to offer enough hours or pay to replace the job they lost; therefore, they say, why bother? This same theory or justification may also be applied to people who are underemployed. An underemployed person is an employed worker who works but not in the desired capacity, whether it be in terms of compensation, hours, or level of skill and experience. While not technically unemployed, the underemployed are often competing for available jobs with both the unemployed and those employed in a greater capacity in the workforce.

Certainly, no simple answers exists. A greater question is what is the responsibility of African-Americans in Cincinnati toward their less fortunate brothers and sisters? One need only to travel the Reading Road corridor to see first-hand the impact of economic inequality. If we start at the Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati and travel north, the income disparities are visible from Mt. Auburn to Avondale to Bond Hill to Roselawn. Where these were once working-class to upper-income neighborhoods, signs of economic disparities are obvious: from the deterioration of housing stock to the number of young people using sidewalks for recreational outlets.

Granted, some of the neighborhoods, such as Avondale, are making a comeback, but the work is tedious. The housing stock may improve in appearance, but the families that are the victims of income inequality will still be the victims.

What is the impact on our communities? What is the fallout resulting from economic inequality? Is it adequate payment for services based upon skills and/or education, or is it a federal determination of exactly what is a living wage? There are no easy answers, and the questions generate interest across the board. The growth of wages has become a key issue at the Federal Reserve, where Chair Janet Yellen highlighted her thoughts about wage growth in a speech in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, on August 22, 2014. In her remarks, Yellen states that one of the factors bearing on estimates of labor-market slack is the elevated number of workers who are employed part-time but desire full-time work. After years of Congressional gridlock, a record number of states have started taking action in recent years to raise the minimum wage.

Even with an increase in the minimum wage, a void still exists that prevents low-income families from achieving income

equality. In the State of Ohio, the minimum wage in 2014 was \$7.95 an hour. In 2015, the minimum wage is projected to be \$8.15 an hour. By 2018, the minimum hourly wage is projected to be \$8.70, a 55-cent increase for a four-year period. Even with these dismal numbers, according to the 2014 Regional Indicators Report produced by Agenda 360 and Vision 2015, our region is slowly increasing. According to the Regional Indicators Report, in 2014, our overall ranking was ranked ninth of 12 comparable-sized cities. In the area of poverty level, we rank fifth. This report uses 200-percent measure of the federal poverty level.

The following is an excerpt of an article written by Donna Jones Baker, president and chief executive of the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, that appeared in the 2014 edition of the National Urban League State of Black America report, "One Nation Underemployed; Jobs Rebuild America."

### **Driving economic self-sufficiency to transform the next generation**

Economic self-sufficiency may be defined as the ability of a person or the ability of a family to maintain a standard of living that is independent of assistance from others.

To be economically self-sufficient is to have the ability to provide basic needs such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, and transportation without the benefit of financial assistance from others, including institutions and government agencies. With this definition of economic self-sufficiency in mind, in 2012 our Urban League launched a comprehensive strategic plan that guides our programming and allows us to directly impact the lives of hundreds of families in our service area. The mission of the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio is to transform generations by promoting personal empowerment and economic self-sufficiency. Our vision is vibrant communities with thriving individuals, families, and businesses.

Changing the paradigm has not been easy. In 2005-2009, 13,772 families lived below the poverty level in Cincinnati. Seventy-six percent of those families were African-American, according to the report “The Social Areas of Cincinnati.” It was researched and written by Michael Maloney and Christopher Auffrey as part of a community research collaborative by the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and the School of Planning at the University of

Cincinnati. The Urban League maintains a commitment to changing that paradigm by focusing on the key areas of workforce development and business development and entrepreneurship. Workforce programs comprise 29.5 percent of our overall agency budget. Both programs are roads to economic self-sufficiency.

The creation of jobs is critical to economic self-sufficiency and can be the first step toward building generational wealth. Our workforce programs are designed to prepare participants for success in the work arena by providing free programs that teach and re-enforce soft skills, basic job readiness, and provide an entrée into the various skilled trades. All of our workforce programs are built upon the foundation of our flagship program: Solid Opportunities for Advancement and Retention (SOAR). In 2013 SOAR and our Accelerated Call Center Education Program (ACE), were the gateways to employment for 650 men and women with jobs paying an average of \$10.50 an hour. These jobs provided program participants a pathway to specialized and seasonal industry-specific training programs and employment. Recognizing the link between poverty and

education, the Urban League annually co-hosts youth oriented pathways to specialized and seasonal industry-specific training programs and employment.

Being economically self-sufficient through owning your own business is not a new concept in the African-American community. We have traditionally owned the neighborhood grocery, the barber shop, the beauty parlor, and the funeral home, all specializing in serving community members. Many of the small businesses supporting our community die due to the lack of operating capital and business acumen. Through our Business Development & Entrepreneurship (BDE) programs, we meet the needs of both established and aspiring entrepreneurs. We include as a part of our BDE program a Small Business Development Center and the regional office of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council women's business certification program. Of major importance in our BDE program is our League's African American Business Development Program (AABDP). Founded in 2010, it provides technical assistance, mentoring, encouragement, and hope for individuals and families as they pursue

their own path to the American dream. To date, 46 companies have participated in the program with a 93-percent completion rate. Of the companies starting the program 88 percent are still in business. Training and success go hand-in-glove. Twenty-three of our business development program companies report having received 351 contracts for a total of \$66.8 million.

Small-business growth has a domino effect; companies participating in our program have been able to hire additional employees, frequently hiring from one of our workforce development programs. The steady company growth of these businesses has resulted in their receiving approximately \$7.5 million in small business loans. In an effort to help support and grow this program, we received a five-year grant from a generational family-owned group of companies — proof that generational wealth is the key to creating an economically stable community.

The Urban League also engages in social entrepreneurship with an on-site call center that will eventually provide employment to more than 150 people making a minimum wage of more than \$10.50 an hour.

Epilogue: In 2014, ACE enrolled 143 participants with a graduation rate of 81 percent. Year to date, 80 graduates have obtained employment for a total of 113 jobs recorded. ACE graduates earned an average starting salary of \$11.02 an hour.

We believe in economic equality and take great pride in our accomplishments to date. There is, however, much more work to be done.

*Wilton Blake is white paper writer, case study writer, and storyteller. Jenny Laster is former project manager for the Greater Cincinnati Urban League's "State of Black Cincinnati."*

# How to compute labor statistics

## Unemployment Rate

Total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force. This is the “official” U-3 unemployment rate used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

$$\frac{\text{Unemployed}}{\text{Civilian Labor Force}}$$

## Jobless

Total unemployed (*LNS13000000 BLS Series ID*), plus discouraged workers (*LNU05026645 BLS Series ID*), plus all other persons marginally attached to the labor force, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all persons marginally attached (*LNU05026642 BLS Series ID*) to the labor force. This is the U-5 unemployment rate used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

$$\frac{\text{Unemployed} + \text{Discouraged} + \text{Marginally Attached}}{\text{Civilian Labor Force} + \text{Marginally Attached}}$$

## Underemployment

Total unemployed, plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force, plus total employed part-time for economic reasons (*LNS12032194 BLS Series ID*), as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force. This is the U-6 unemployment rate used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

$$\frac{\text{Unemployed} + \text{Marginally Attached} + \text{Part-Time}}{\text{Civilian Labor Force} + \text{Marginally Attached}}$$

**Note:**

Persons **marginally attached** to the labor force are those who currently are neither working nor looking for work but indicate that they want and are available for a job and have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months. **Discouraged workers**, a subset of the marginally attached, have

given a job-market related reason for not currently looking for work. Persons employed **part-time** for economic reasons are those who want and are available for full-time work but have had to settle for a part-time schedule. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

# Regional growth out-pacing inclusion of black-owned business

By Sean Rugless

“...the economic disparities separating blacks and whites remain as wide as they were when marchers assembled on the Mall in 1963.”

— *Michael A. Fletcher, Washington Post*

## A historical perspective

This report comes at a time of historical significance. The years 2014 and 2015 mark the 50th anniversaries of the signing of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, respectively; two pieces of landmark legislation, signed only 10 months apart collectively outlawed discrimination and the denial of access to schools, workplaces, public facilities, and voting based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Since then, civil rights and community movements, such as the NAACP, the National Urban League and its affiliates, and black chambers of commerce have had

a consistent call for accessibility to jobs, education and justice.

However, an August 2013 Washington Post article states, “Even as racial barriers have been toppled and the nation has grown wealthier and better educated, the economic disparities separating blacks and whites remain as wide as they were when marchers assembled on the Mall in 1963.” The analysis highlights:

- The black unemployment rate has consistently been twice as high as the white unemployment rate for 50 years. In fact, if the rest of the nation experienced the same unemployment levels as blacks, it would be labeled a particularly severe recession.
- The gap in household income and wealth between blacks and whites hasn’t narrowed in the last 50 years; in fact it grew even wider during the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

- Our schools are more segregated today than in 1980. The more non-white students a school has, the fewer resources it has. A 10 percentage-point increase in the share of non-white students in a school is associated with a \$75 decrease in per student spending.
- Blacks are still more likely to be uninsured than whites.
- The racial disparity in incarceration rates is bigger than it was in the 1960s. The incarceration rate of black men is more than six times higher than that of white men, slightly larger than the gap in 1960, when it was 5:1. Incarceration limits economic freedom.

In 1964, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. moved “beyond civil rights.” He would introduce the notion that there can be no social justice without economic justice. Why? At the very core of crime, education, poverty, and ultimately leadership is a direct correlation on the state the African-American economic situation.

### **Our local economic context**

Greater Cincinnati offers a robust economic infrastructure. Greater Cincinnati is the 25th largest metropolitan region in

the country, and our region is home to headquarters of nine Fortune 500 and five Fortune 1000 firms. Additionally, the level of public infrastructure spending and investment occurring within public entities such as the City of Cincinnati, public school districts, and state level procurement fosters business opportunities that can create a viable climate for business growth.

However, a significant challenge to our regional competitiveness is that the pace of economic inclusion for African-American businesses has not kept pace with the pace of economic growth being experienced throughout our region. Said another way, we mimic, not exceed, the national trend. As Cincinnati has become more diverse with almost 1 out of 2 city residents being African-American, the health, vibrancy, and attractiveness of our economic climate is intimately tied to the strength of this business segment. Our regional snapshot reveals:

- The unemployment rate for these residents remains at twice the level of the majority population, with a per capita income at almost half.
- While minority business is the fastest-growing sector in the country — according to the U.S. Department of Commerce’s

Minority Business Development Agency — collectively minority businesses within the Cincinnati region contribute less than 1 percent of regional gross domestic product.

- African-American participation in both public- and private-sector supplier diversity programs on average perform lower than a nationally acceptable threshold of 15-20 percent of spending.

### **Our collective focus**

As small business is a catalyst to a stronger economy, we understand that there is a direct relationship between small business growth, job creation, and the status of our communities.

One strategy to reverse disparities faced by one of our largest population segments, African-Americans, is to spur the economic growth within its business segment.

The African American Chamber Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky's mission is to establish, cultivate and strengthen consumer and business relationships, provide access to major corporate markets for our African-American business owners to help increase business opportunities,

and assist in developing strategic partnerships and alliances for the purpose of strengthening and growing the business community. We join other regional minority business organizations such as the Greater Cincinnati Urban League, the Minority Business Accelerator, and Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council to collectively reduce the disparities facing African-American enterprises.

### **A point to grow from**

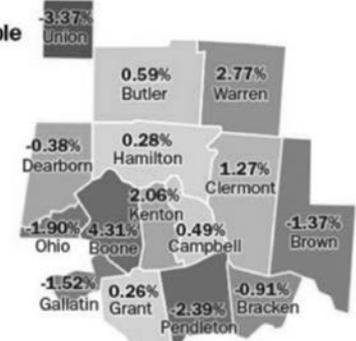
To improve the economic growth among African-American and minority businesses, we must establish a baseline from which to monitor progress. The exhibits and findings that follow provide benchmarks from which we can evaluate our progress toward economic vitality for this business segment and a trajectory for efforts designed to enhance that progress.

### **I. Geography**

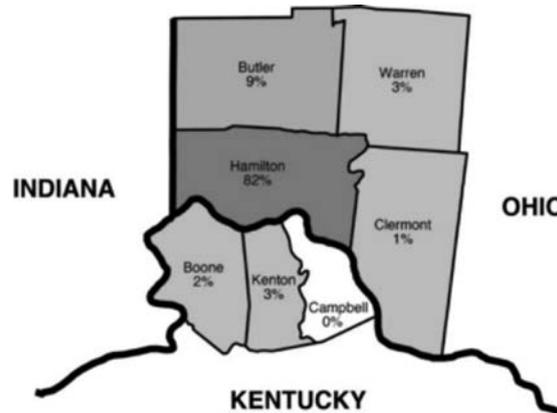
While the vast majority of African-American owned businesses reside in Hamilton County, almost 20 percent of our businesses operate in surrounding counties, with 10 percent in the northern suburbs of the region.

	Total Firms	% of all Firms
Hamilton	7,603	82%
Butler	861	9%
Kenton	310	3%
Warren	255	3%
Boone	171	2%
Clermont	69	1%
Campbell	0	0%
	9,269	

**FACT** Outlying counties lost population, while Hamilton County was stable and most of its immediate neighbors grew.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; annual resident population estimates. The Frazier/Dandy Matrix, Mark West



The high concentration of African-American business within Hamilton County is significant. That importance comes from the dollar volume of business opportunities that are presented with economic development initiatives, infrastructure projects, business attraction efforts, and the increasing focus on economic inclusion for public procurement activity. Additionally, Hamilton County continues to have a strong density of private sector business relationships that can fuel enterprise growth for the minority business segment.

In addition to the density in Hamilton County, there is growing presence of African-American firms in the outlying suburbs that are adjacent to Cincinnati, following recent shifts in regional population and development trends. A U.S. Census Population estimate released in March 2014 shows that Cincinnati's population decline has slowed and shows healthy growth over the past three years in traditional hot spots surrounding the city, such as Warren and Clermont counties in Ohio and Boone and Kenton counties in Kentucky. As economic development continues to grow in the first-ring suburbs and counties adjacent to Hamilton County, and if the City of Cincinnati is perceived as having an unfavorable business climate for African-Americans, we can expect a stronger migration of African-American firms to either establish offices and/or conduct a higher level of business in those surrounding areas.

## **II. Percentage of business community**

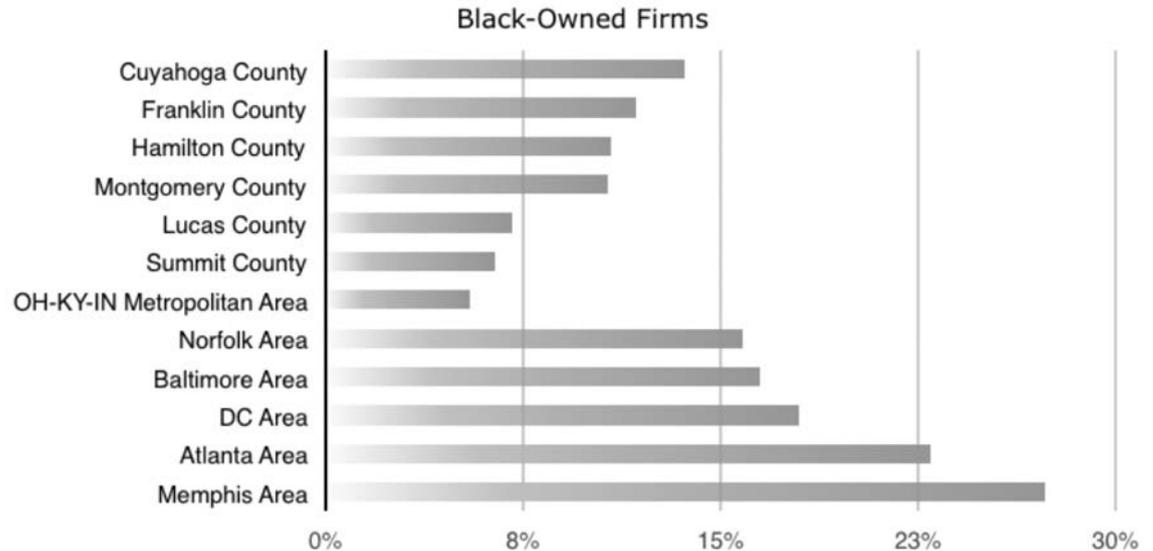
As we have seen significant growth in the number of African-American owned businesses in our region, as a percentage of total businesses compared to various geographies, the Cincinnati metropolitan

statistical area lags behind major in-state and out-of-state metropolitan areas.

While African-American enterprises make up 18.3 percent of all businesses in the city of Cincinnati, regionally we lag behind cities and regions that we benchmark for diversity and economic development. Cincinnati's African-American business density is lower than both Cleveland and Columbus markets, and is at parity with Dayton. In regions of the United States that are recognized for their diverse communities, the percentage of African-American businesses are one-third to 100 percent higher than our region.

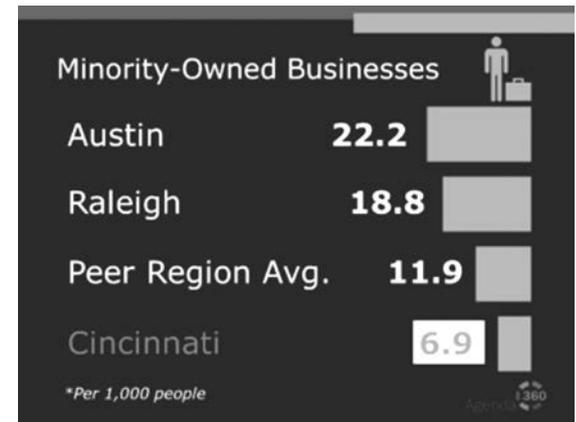
This is significant as the availability to quality suppliers, diverse experiences, and retail, job creation, and innovative entrepreneurs is essential to attract much-needed talent and new corporations to the region.

The Diverse by Design 2014 report also highlights that we have room for improvement. When we explore minority-owned businesses per capita — the number of minority-owned businesses per 1,000 people — we find we are significantly behind cities that are fast becoming hotbeds for minority business attraction, much like



Atlanta was in the mid-1980s. While the regional chamber's Minority Business Accelerator has helped grow minority-owned companies and increased spending with them over the past 10 years, there is still plenty of opportunity to help budding entrepreneurs and small companies grow.

One of the key insights in our Diverse by Design report was that companies here have a hard time retaining highly skilled African-Americans and other black employees. Anecdotally, what we've learned is that



the lack of a visible black middle class, and experiences that cater to them, is a key reason why diverse talent retention is low and why high potential recruits and minority entrepreneurs depart for Atlanta, the District of Columbia, and other regions that are more inclusive.

### III. Size of enterprise

African-American firms contribute two-thirds of a billion dollars in receipts, with two-thirds of that volume coming from employer-based firms. To accelerate job creation multipliers, attention must be paid toward increasing the number of

African-American firms in key sectors and establishing more businesses of scale.

Within six counties of the Cincinnati metropolitan statistical area, African-American firms generated \$665 million in sales. These firms directly employ 3,901 workers and generate almost a \$100 million payroll annually.

Regionally, African-American firms are over-index in percentage of sole proprietor/non-employees firms at 96 percent. The U.S. average is 75 percent.

### Summary of Black-Owned Firms in Cincinnati Region

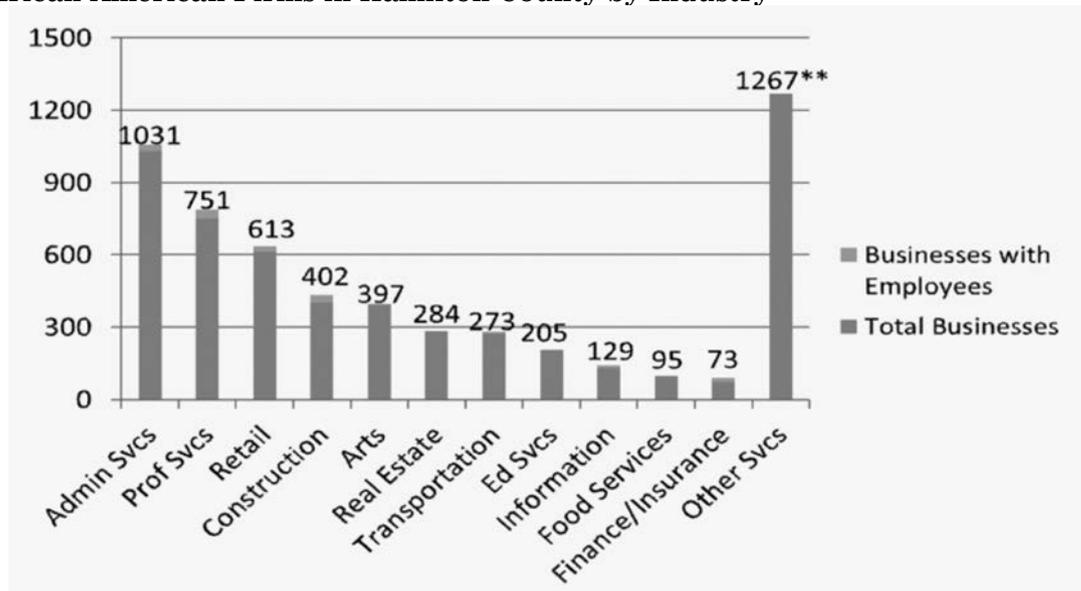
County	Total Firms	Total Sales Receipts	Firms with Employees	Total Sales Firms with Employees	Total Number of Employees	Annual Payroll
Hamilton	7,603	\$451M	315	\$309M	3,346	\$85M
Butler	861	\$93M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kenton	310	\$17M	25	\$10M	159	\$4M
Warren	255	\$34M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Boone	171	\$15M	34	\$11M	146	\$4M
Clermont	69	\$54M	8	\$53M	250	\$6M
Total	9,269	\$665M	382	\$385M	3,901	\$99M

(Source: U.S. Census)

While 96 percent of African-American firms that had no employees contributed 42 percent of total receipts for this segment, their average annual sales were approximately \$32,000, establishing them as micro-enterprises. One main driver of this outcome might be the practice of establishing an enterprise/business

to generate a livable wage among those that have been unsuccessful in obtaining employment. However, the focus on employer-based firms is essential because employer-based firms make up only 4 percent of all African-American firms but generated 58 percent of all receipts for this segment.

### African-American Firms in Hamilton County by Industry



\*According to the 2007 Census, there are 7603 black-owned firms in Hamilton County; however, 2083 are not classified by industry.

\*\*Other includes religious, grant-making and civic organizations.

#### **IV. Industry**

By industry, professional and administrative services are the leading sectors for African-American firms. Construction and retail, while highly visible within the African-American business sector, are strong third- and fourth-largest sectors.

Despite a strong presence in both business-to-business and business-to-consumer categories, the largest category of African-American registered businesses lie in religious, grant-making, and civic organizations. To unlock more substantial economic progress, there is an opportunity to drive stronger entry into high-growth sectors of our region's major industries:

- Education
- Financial services
- Insurance
- Manufacturing
- BioHealth
- Food processing and agriculture
- Information technology

These sectors are targeted for investment and workforce development.

#### **V. Public sector economic inclusion**

Public infrastructure and purchasing

activities have been effective in generating wealth and enterprise growth among African-American-owned firms when there has been a dedicated focus and effective platforms in place.

Governments use procurement and public projects to present economic development opportunities that stimulate enterprise growth. The level of inclusion and successful vendor/supplier relationships have long been critical cornerstones to African-American business increases and job growth. One primary concern of minority business owners is whether such investments will reach their respective communities.

While we have had episodes of success, there are many supplier diversity and inclusion practices in the areas of public spending that have historically and consistently under-performed. There continues to be ineffective inclusion programs that, because of their poorly designed structure and wavering commitment, actually suppress business opportunities from a pipeline of ready and willing business owners and reduce the economic benefit of putting underrepresented groups to work.

### Summary of Black-Owned Firms in Cincinnati Region

Agency	Period	Diverse Spend
State of Ohio	FY 2014	Spent \$165M with certified MBEs (10.65% of eligible Spend against 15% Goal)
Port Authority	CY 2013	Spent \$7.1M with MBEs (23.7% of Total Project Costs)
Cincinnati Metro	FY 2013	Spent \$27M with DBE, SBE, MBE, WBE and DOB (22.07% of Total Spend)*
Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority	CY 2013	Spent \$4M with MWBEs (24% of Total Spend)
City of Cincinnati	CY 2013	Spent \$5.2M with certified SBEs who self-identify as African-American (2.1% of Total Spend) Spent \$40.7M with certified SBEs (16.6% of Total Spend vs. a 30% Goal)
Kenton County Airport	FY 2013	Spent \$0 with DBEs (0% of Total Spend)*
OKI	Jan. 13 – July 14	Spent \$11K with DBEs
Cincinnati Public Schools		Requested

\*Kenton County Airport Board officially launched a DBE program in 2014.

Source: Annual Reports and Public Records Requests

In the past year, there appears to be a heightened focus on inclusion. The City of Cincinnati's Small Business Enterprise program has not delivered substantive Minority Business Enterprise participation. Contracting levels with Minority Business Enterprises remains less than 4 percent for almost a decade. The City is introducing an office of Economic Inclusion and potentially new legislation to improve outcomes. The State of Ohio has established inclusion goals of 15 percent for Minority Business Enterprises and 5 percent for Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity. Moving forward, greater strides are still needed to ensure that the programs are designed to meet their objectives and deliver their intended effects. When African-American businesses are not included in economic activity, it hurts our economy.

## **VI. Private sector snapshot**

There continues to be a robust set of initiatives to grow the corporate pipeline of minority business enterprises. We can assess the strength of these efforts by examining outcomes and key indicators of two regional minority business partners.

The Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council, an affiliate of the National

Minority Supplier Development Council, is dedicated to providing a direct link between Minority Business Enterprises and its corporate members. Its focus is to assist the development and maintenance of effective corporate supplier diversity programs.

Per the 2014 annual report of the Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council, the Cincinnati's regional pipeline and outcomes remain strong for certified minority businesses. Highlights include:

- The 4 Billion Dollar Roundtable Corporations in this region maintained their standing as they spent at least \$4 billion with diverse companies.
- The regional pipeline of Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council sits at 376 certified Minority Business Enterprises.
- Regionally, Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council certified companies represent approximately \$3.9 million in total annual gross revenue.
- These minority enterprises employed 10,480 persons, of which 4,228 were ethnic minorities.

The Minority Business Accelerator is the flagship economic development initiative of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber and

focused on growing sizable minority firms. The accelerator's mission is to speed up the development of sizable minority business enterprises and strengthen and expand the regional minority entrepreneurial community. The accelerator works with regional companies to increase their utilization of and spending with local minority-owned businesses by helping them identify and connect with local minority suppliers who can meet specific needs for products and services.

- 36 Minority Business Accelerator Goal Setter companies spent more than \$1 billion with minority companies in Cincinnati USA.
- 35 African-American and Hispanic-owned member firms.
- Average portfolio firm revenue reached \$32 million.

- Portfolio firms employed 3,246 persons, and 48 percent of employees are minorities.

Each of these organizations have introduced new capability to advance the scale and performance of its Minority Business Enterprises constituency. For example, in 2014 the Minority Business Accelerator launched the Ross Love Growth Bridge Fund, a \$1.7 million fund that provides flexible debt capital to finance growth projects of established African-American and Hispanic-owned firms in the region.

*Sean Rugless is president and chief executive officer of the African American Chamber of Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky.*

# Acme Wrecking's history provides lessons in savvy, excellence

By Schuyler J. Smith

I began my entrepreneurial journey in 1945 when I opened a dry cleaning business at the corner of Lincoln and Gilbert avenues in Walnut Hills. At that time, three other cleaners — Harold Overton at Altoona and Buena Vista; New Way at Gilbert and Beecher, and Fenton on Churchill and Beecher — also did business in our immediate area.

After the years, I was able to build a plant in suburban Lockland to handle all of the physical cleaning of the clothing, and the Walnut Hills location served as a drop-off and pick-up location.

We added a formal rental service that allowed us to take advantage of the need for tuxedos and formal wear for men. At that time, a cultural stigma existed that limited mainstream companies from renting tuxedos

to African-Americans — whites did not want to wear a tuxedo that black man had worn — so we were able to take advantage of that.

The irony is that we rented tuxedos from a white-owned formal wear provider and operated as a pass-through for the clothing. The white public did not know about this arrangement, and it went on for years. We struggled but did well for those times, earning a little more than \$50,000 per year.

In 1955, a childhood friend of mine from Richmond, Kentucky, called and asked if I would help him demolish a barn in Indian Hill on a Saturday. We rented some tools and a small truck and got the job done in a weekend's time. After we paid all of our expenses and split the remaining money, I had made more than I would for a week at the dry cleaners. This experience turned on a light in my mind regarding the profitability of the wrecking business. I

would end up pursuing it one job at a time with great success.

I founded Acme Wrecking Company and began hand-wrecking with a small crew that included my brother and some other friends. I picked that name because it was the first listing in the phone book. We added tools and eventually purchased a truck and additional equipment. In those days, loans were not available to black-owned businesses, so we did everything on a cash basis for many years. I purchased a lot and building on Whittier Street in Walnut Hills, where we operated until Interstate 71 construction claimed our property, which the state bought from us.

We moved around the corner to Wehrman Avenue and Syracuse Street, and for the next 30 years bought and developed the entire street for our business uses. I actually lived on Syracuse Street as a teenager with my family; we were on welfare. Ironically, I was able to come back years later and own the entire street.

We moved into public-sector work for the City of Cincinnati and the State of Ohio. Many of our clients from the hand-wrecking

business hired us, too, so we continued to do houses and other private projects. We continued to self-finance everything until the late 1970s when banks were under pressure to make loans to minority-owned businesses. We used our credit strategically to buy land and equipment, which allowed us to specialize in industrial demolition. They are the largest buildings and presented us with complex demolition strategies. Our timing was again right. We were fortunate to be in a region with a lot of manufacturing businesses that were expanding, modernizing, or going out of business.

Acme had the opportunity to work on some of the largest projects in the city: clearing the four city blocks for Procter & Gamble's world headquarters Downtown, and modernization of its Ivorydale plant; removal of tracks and other small structures at Union Terminal; the demolition of Harry's Corner for the expansion of the Duke Energy Center; and the removal of the old LeBlond Plant in Norwood, where Rookwood shopping center now sits at Madison and Edwards roads.

Acme Wrecking was a success story because of the many people who worked with us in

our 50 years in business. We trained many equipment operators and truck drivers who otherwise would not have been able to get opportunities with majority companies. Our employees were dedicated, and I always tried to lead by example.

Today, the environment is so very different. Many of the barriers that we faced no longer exist for minority companies, and I see a lot of people taking advantage of opportunities and succeeding. Black business owners have more access to capital and larger-dollar volume bids. African-American businesses have overall better relationships with buyers and purchasing departments. We

operated under the radar. We did not make a big deal out of being black-owned. We focused on being the best and providing the best service and value for our clients.

My personal hope is that all of the roadblocks and dead ends we endured are cleared for the next generation of black entrepreneurs. Their access to capital, education, and leadership positions will enable the playing field to truly be leveled as we move toward a more inclusive business environment.

*Schuyler J. Smith is founder and served as president of Acme Wrecking Company from 1955-2005.*



*“The Affordable Care Act’s expansion of public and private insurance must not be curtailed.”*

**HEALTH**

# Social inequities complicate racial health disparities

By Karen Bankston

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

— *Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., in a speech to the Medical Committee for Human Rights, 1966*

Each time I hear this quote, I think that despite having made tremendous strides in the delivery of care since 1966, we continue to have a burgeoning gap between the health outcomes of African-Americans and other citizens.

The health care disparity affecting African-Americans is talked about across organizations and conferences by individuals who are interested in health outcomes or the impact of health on their “bottom line.” Yet these same individuals are often at a loss for how to close the gap. These negative outcomes can be correlated to some of the many social

inequalities that have been borne of a history of polarization. Subsequently, we have yet to find tools that can effectively diagnose the causes and develop treatment interventions to close the health disparities gap.

It is often said that you can determine the state of a community by assessing the state of health of its children. African-American babies and children in Cincinnati are negatively disproportionately impacted on all fronts that prohibit their ability to live their best lives. Specifically, we have high rates of infant mortality, asthma, allergies, and dental problems, to name a few. Additionally, their parents are faced with high rates of diabetes, advanced stage breast cancer, and increased likelihood to die of cardiovascular disease. The causes of these health challenges, while scientifically understood, are complicated by the intersection of complex social inequities.

These inequities compound the ability of our public, private, and community health infrastructure to be effective, because they must organize the initiatives to be culturally sensitive in an environment that may not be ready for social change.

Subsequently, the reduction and ensuing elimination of disparities in health care will require input from multiple stakeholders, not just those who focus on the bottom line. Specifically, health care providers, educators, community and faith leaders, policymakers, funding agencies, corporate leaders, and most importantly, the recipients of care must be the soldiers for change.

The social determinants that are at the foundation of these existing disparities require systemic change facilitated by inspiration of multiple components brought

on by the stakeholders. The building of these coalitions is critical to transcending the barrier(s) that allow for poverty, poor education, joblessness, and homelessness. We must all join in the fight. Winning the battle(s) will allow us to gain a greater understanding of the relationship of where health care and the social determinants intersect to close the health disparities gap.

“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, other-centered men can build up.”

— *Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.*

*Karen Bankston is owner of KDB and Associates Consulting Services.*

# Seeing public health in context of poor housing, other social ills

By Noble A-W Maseru

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”  
— *Booker T. Washington*

The passing of the calendar year 2014 offers the opportunity to reflect on the health of the public in Cincinnati and look forward to the challenges ahead. Before doing so, let’s acquire a brief understanding what public health is: A professional workforce applying a body of knowledge to solve health problems, that is the frontline defense and safety net to prevent, protect, and promote the health of the public.

As Bernard Turnock of the University of Illinois at Chicago says, “public health is literally the health of the public, as measured in terms of health and illness in a population.” (1)

The vision of the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) is “... to work for the

health and wellness of Cincinnati residents and visitors, employing methods that include surveillance, assessment, disease prevention and protection, health education, and assuring access to public health services.” This objective is accomplished through partnerships with schools, hospitals, community health centers, health insurers, community action agencies, businesses, the faith community, health and human services stakeholder organizations, and other community based groups to improve residents’ quality of life and well-being.

The Cincinnati Health Department’s programs and services endeavor to realize: health equity and social justice (2); improvement in the health and social well-being of communities; sustained economic and human development; and a competent and mutually respectful workforce.

In addressing the state of public health in African-Americans in Cincinnati, we proceed

with a social equity lens that is predicated upon three premises. First, the health and well-being of a community will not be realized if inequality is too great. Second, strategies to end health inequity are fashioned around “systems change” and collaboration. Third, it is argued, a “healthy Cincinnati for all” will not occur unless decision makers of the health systems and human services agencies have a health equity framework.

Our charge by the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio is to contribute a section in “The State of Black Cincinnati,” 2015 edition. Consequently, this article will have an additional focus on the implications for the African-American community.

### **Health and well-being of a community not realized if inequality is too great**

“The present differences in mortality seem to be sufficiently explained by conditions of life. Our death rate is without the slightest doubt a death rate due to poverty and discrimination.”

— *W.E.B. Du Bois*

Social justice is a core value of public health. The Cincinnati Health Department is compelled to address social justice in

the context of income, occupational shifts, education, socioeconomic status, population heterogeneity, poverty, lack of access to transportation, safe affordable housing, nutritious foods, safe space, and other measures that affect population health. These measures have in some cases resulted in a disproportionate burden of disease and premature death for certain populations.

No single factor or measure encompasses the health status of a community. That said, two indices generally accepted as indicators of a population’s health status are highlighted in this article: life expectancy and infant mortality.

### **Life expectancy in Cincinnati**

Life expectancy at birth is an indicator of health conditions (3). Cincinnati Health Department Assistant Commissioner Dr. Camille Jones and biostatistician Dr. Justin Blackburn developed life expectancy data for each of 47 Cincinnati neighborhood groupings.

The average Cincinnati resident lives 76.7 years, two years less than the average American, suggesting that we are not as healthy as the rest of the nation. The table below illustrates the life expectancy gap

that exists between men (73.6 years) and women (79.6 years) in Cincinnati. While this disparity between the two sexes is also seen in Ohio and the U.S. as a whole, life expectancy for both men and women in Cincinnati is less than the average Ohioan and the average U.S. resident.

African-American men and women do not live as long as their white counterparts in Cincinnati. On average, African-American men live 10 fewer years than white men (63.8 vs. 73.8), and African-American women live 6

fewer years than white women (72.4 vs. 79.0). While racial disparities exist at the state and national levels, African-American women are living far shorter lives in Cincinnati (72.4 years) than in Ohio (76.5 years) and the United States (77.4 years) as a whole, and the same holds true for African-American men (63.8 years vs. 69.8 years for Ohio overall and 70.9 years for the U.S.). These findings point to significant health inequities that must be addressed as a city.

*More detail is available in the Table I below.*

### Life Expectancy at Birth, Cincinnati 2001-2009 compared to other jurisdictions

Indicator	Cincinnati	Hamilton County	Ohio	US*
Life Expectancy at birth (years)	76.7	--	77.5	78.7
Females	79.6	79.9	80.2	81.0
Males	73.6	74.7	75.1	76.2
Black Life Expectancy at Birth	68.3	--	--	75.1
Black Females	72.4	76.9	76.5	78.0
Black Males	63.8	70.5	69.8	71.8
White Life Expectancy at Birth	76.5	--	--	78.9
White Females	79.0	80.8	80.6	81.3
White Males	73.8	75.9	75.6	76.5

Notes:

Data year: Cincinnati life expectancy, 2001-2009; County and State life expectancy, 2009; US life expectancy, 2010

Data Sources: Cincinnati death certificates, 2001-2009; Ohio state and county data: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington, 2009; US data: Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus/contents2012.htm#018>

### **Difference in life expectancy at birth for neighborhoods within city**

The Cincinnati Health Department has developed life expectancy data for each of 47 neighborhood groupings. Only 14 of the 47 neighborhoods met the United States' 78.7 year life expectancy. These life expectancy calculations show that newborns in some neighborhoods may expect to live as many as 20 years longer than newborns in other neighborhoods. This disparity can be seen even in neighborhoods that are geographically located right next to each other. For example, newborns in North Avondale/Paddock Hills can expect to live to about 87 years, while newborns in Avondale — immediately to the south — have a life expectancy of about 68 years. This disparity reflects the uneven development, social inequities, and income inequality of our neighborhoods. Unemployment is also a significant factor in premature death.

*See Life Expectancy at Birth, by Neighborhood, Table number 1 in the Appendix. Page 48.*

These variations in life expectancy help to further identify neighborhoods where factors that adversely impact health and well-being may be concentrated.

### **Infant vitality in Cincinnati**

Vitality is assessed by indicators of health, access to health care, well-being, morbidity, and mortality.

In Cincinnati, similar to disparities in life expectancy that can be mapped geographically by neighborhood, infant mortality can also be mapped by neighborhood. Neighborhoods with the greatest socioeconomic needs generally are at greater risk for premature death. Moreover, having a baby is not solely a medical event; it's also a social event. Consequently we have implemented a strategic framework that advances a public health approach in addressing infant mortality. More than monitoring and tracking, our public health approach includes interventions that are sensitive to client's social and environmental determinants of health, recognizing the social context in which our clients function, not just what is seen at the point of intervention.

To better understand Cincinnati's distribution of infant mortality, we calculated infant mortality rates (IMR) by zip code. The results ranged from 0.0 to 32.2 deaths per 1,000 live births.

*See Infant Mortality by Zip Code Table number 2 in Appendix. Page 50.*

In 2007, the Cincinnati Health Department established the Infant Vitality Surveillance Network (IVSN) that expanded into a collaboration comprising University of Cincinnati Medical Center and federally qualified community health centers, including WinMed, Lincoln Heights, and the now-closed West End and neighborhood community health centers. The five-year infant mortality rate for 2006-2010 for the surveillance network was 9.2 compared to the city's rate of 13.6 – a 30-percent improvement in vitality.

*See Cincinnati Infant Mortality Rate Table number 3 in Appendix. Page 51.*

Moreover, in terms of prematurity, ostensibly the leading cause of newborn death – the surveillance network prematurity rate was 9.4 percent, 33 percent better than the 14-percent city-wide rate during the same time period.

*See Table number 4 Percent of Children Born Premature in Cincinnati by Provider of Care and Race 2010-2011 in Appendix. Page 52.*

The nation's "Healthy People 2020" prematurity goal is 11.4 percent.

In August 2012, building upon the six-year surveillance network experience, we initiated a tracking application for infant vitality that expanded into client-centered care coordination. The First Steps Program involves hospital discharge and home visitation agency feedback (4). The additional partners include: The Christ Hospital, Lighthouse Youth Services, American Home Nursing, Healthy Moms & Babes, and Health Care Access Now. The First Steps Program's goal was to achieve a 9.9 infant mortality rate or lower for each zip code, as well as across the city, by January 1, 2015. The 9.9 city-wide target rate was achieved early, in 2013. This amounts to a 27.2-percent reduction from the city's 2010 13.6 infant mortality rate.

*See Table number 5 Cincinnati IMR 2006-2013 in Appendix. Page 53.*

The Nation's Healthy People 2020 infant mortality rate goal is 6.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The nation's rate of infant mortality reduction for a decade has been 3 to 5 percent per year.

The national rate dropped by 10.4 percent from 6.7 (2007), to 6.0 in (2011). During that same period Ohio, Cincinnati and Cincinnati Health Department rates decreased 6.5 percent, 26.6 percent, and 100 percent, respectively. The African-American infant mortality rate decreased 8.1 percent, 30.7 percent, and 100 percent, respectively for

Ohio, Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Health Department. The white infant mortality rate decreased 6.3 percent, 22.8 percent, and 100 percent, respectively, for Ohio, Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati Health Department.

*See Table II below*

**Table II. Infant Mortality Rate Percent Increase-Decrease Comparisons 2007**

	Ohio	USA	Cincinnati	CHD	Hamilton County*
Caucasian	6.3	5.6	7.9	N/A	7.4
African-American	14.8	13.3	18.2	N/A	15.9
Total	7.7	6.7	13.5	7.1	8.8

**2013**

	Ohio	%+/-	USA	%+/-	Cincinnati	%+/-	CHD	%+/-	Hamilton County*	%+/-
Caucasian	5.9	(6.3)	N/A	N/A	6.1	(22.8)	0.0	(100)	5.5	(21.6)
African-American	13.6	(8.1)	N/A	N/A	12.6	(30.7)	0.0	(100)	18.4	15.7
Total	7.2	(6.5)	6.0**	(10.4)	9.9	(26.6)	0.0	(100)	7.8	(11.4)

\*= Minus City

\*\*=2011 Latest Available Data

Infant Mortality Rate = number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births

Sources: Cincinnati Health Department office of Vital Records and Statistics, Report of the Secretary's Advisory Committee of Infant Mortality (SACIM), Ohio Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics 2013

Our evidence clearly shows that the public health approach, including the surveillance network and First Steps Program, is an effective application in improving maternal and infant health. It's proactive, focuses on prevention, and provides real-time, flexible, upstream intervention opportunities. Moreover, the First Steps care coordination and hospital discharge protocol attained the 2007-2010 infant mortality rate goal of 9.9 city wide, affirming the surveillance network public health intervention effectiveness in achieving infant vitality and maternal health improvement.

The patient experience in the federally qualified community health centers offers evidence that differences in health outcomes are not solely due to race, ethnicity, and place. A public health oriented approach can achieve health equity (5).

For example the racial ethnic makeup of the Cincinnati Health Department/University of Cincinnati Medical Center ob-gyn client population is 56 percent African-American, and 78 percent of our clients reside in the “target” zip codes that initially had the highest infant mortality rates in the city (rates greater than or equal to 10). Some

of these “target” zip codes have a majority African-American population with a 70 percent poverty concentration. African-American crude infant mortality rate numbers are 2 to 3 times the rates of whites. But when you compare the rate of African-American clients by provider, the disparity is not constant. (6)

Additionally, with our intervention, the prematurity rate race disparity between the Cincinnati Health Department (public health) and the city (non-public health) was eliminated.

*See Table number 4 Percent of Children Born Premature in Cincinnati by Source of Care and Race 2010-2011 in Appendix. Page 52.*

### **Public health effectiveness in reducing premature birth**

The national premature birth rate fell to 11.4 percent in 2013, the lowest in 17 years — meeting the nation’s “Healthy People 2020” goal. However, despite that progress, the U.S. earned a “C” grade, falling short of the March of Dimes Premature Birth Report Card target for 2020 of less than 9.6 percent premature births. Ohio’s 12.1 percent also received a grade of “C.” But there is

good news in Cincinnati. Our Cincinnati Health Department, in collaboration with University of Cincinnati Medical Center, met the federal “Healthy People 2020” goal for four consecutive years (2010-2013), and our 8.5 premature birth rate earned a March of Dimes Report Card Grade “A.”

We attribute this success to the public health care experience received in our health centers, as well as to the surveillance network First Steps protocol discussed above. The public health based surveillance network 2013 prematurity rate was 9.8. The 108 premature births prevented by the health department-UC Medical Center intervention since 2008 amounted to an estimated \$16 million to \$31 million dollars saved in medical and neonatal intensive care unit costs.

*See Table number 6 CHD Prematurity Cost Savings in Appendix. Page 54.*

However, there’s much work to be done. Our responsibility as public health officers is to improve population health citywide and not solely for clients served in our CHD health centers.

Preventing premature birth is a leading factor for decreasing years of potential life lost.

Premature birth, defined as birth that occurs before the 37th week of pregnancy, is a serious health problem that can have serious lifelong consequences. Infants that survive an early birth can face a myriad of health challenges.

In 2013, there were 823 premature births in Cincinnati, which amounts to approximately 1 in 7 births. To reach the “Healthy People” and March of Dimes 2020 targets, we must have 35-50 fewer premature births, respectively, per year for six years. The current city-wide annual reduction in number of premature births has been close to nine premature births per year. At that rate we would reach the “Healthy People 2020” and March of Dimes targets in 2039 and 2050, respectively.

The 2020 national targets are doable. Five years ago, Cincinnati’s infant mortality rate was 13.4; but in 2013 the city’s rate improved to a historically low 9.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. And the 2013 African-American rate in Cincinnati was the lowest in the state.

*See Table number 7 IMR By Race, Selected Ohio Jurisdictions 2012 in Appendix. Page 55.*

We believe collaboration was instrumental in achieving the historic low city-wide rate of 9.9. Similar success can occur in reducing prematurity.

Cincinnati, in addition to the intervention programs mentioned above, has several public health oriented projects and initiatives that may also impact preventable premature birth, such as the Best Baby Zone, Every Child Succeeds, Start Strong, Cradle Cincinnati, Healthy Start, Centering Pregnancy models, Council on Child Abuse, and philanthropic and social support programs such as Interact for Health and the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency.

What follows may be counterintuitive and requires some explanation. It's popularly stated that premature birth is the number one cause of infant deaths. Based on Morehouse College Public Health Institute Imhotep Fellows Rebecca Tamayo and Curtis Clark's review of Cincinnati's 53 infant death certificates in 2014, we found that:

- 82 percent of the 53 infant deaths for which we had data in 2013 were premature;

- 87 percent of the mothers had income below the federal poverty level;
- 61 percent of the mothers were not on the Women, Infants, and Children's (WIC) nutritional supplemental food program;
- 76 percent were not smokers.

Cincinnati's 34-percent poverty rate is the third highest in the nation. The Cincinnati child poverty rate in 2012 was 53 percent. We believe these findings indicate that chronic poverty is the underlying reason for high prematurity and the subsequent high proportion of infant deaths. We have demonstrated empirically, that low infant mortality rates can be achieved through effective care coordination, home visitation, and care experience for clients that are in a low socioeconomic strata. However, to be successful in reducing the proportion of infant births that are premature, the evidence seems to indicate that intervention is required upstream to impact acquiring:

1. Health care coverage (i.e. pre-conceptual health planning and pregnancy spacing).
2. Employment out of poverty (livable wage).

Social inequality in our city is the quiet crisis that must be arrested to achieve the National "Healthy People" and March of Dimes 2020

prematurity birth percentage targets.

**Health inequity strategies are a core function for “systems change” and collaboration**

“Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and inhumane.”  
— *Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Racial health disparity is not as severe as it appears. Achieving health equity is our challenge. As noted above, Cincinnati’s poverty rate calculated by U.S. Census Bureau is 34 percent, twice the Ohio rate (15 percent), and one of the highest rates nationally. The child poverty rate in 2012 was 53 percent. Several neighborhoods in Cincinnati are home to high concentrations of poverty – in some neighborhoods as high as 80 percent of households are impoverished. In a study presented in the New York Times on July 22, 2013, Cincinnati ranked 650th out of 728 markets for upward social mobility. The nation’s areas with greater upward social mobility had five characteristics: less segregation, less income inequality, better schools, greater social capital, and more stable families.

A December 17, 2014 Pew Research Center Report found that among lower-tier income families, the net worth has decreased 18 percent since 1983, while the upper tier increased their net worth by 101 percent.

Similar to the infant mortality rate by zip code gradient (See Appendix Table number 2, Page 50), when life expectancy and household poverty are mapped there exists a visual correlation of low life expectancy with high poverty. A neighborhood’s health is not simply an aggregation of individual deaths or due to factors that affect the health of individuals, but rather involves social and other conditions of living. (7)

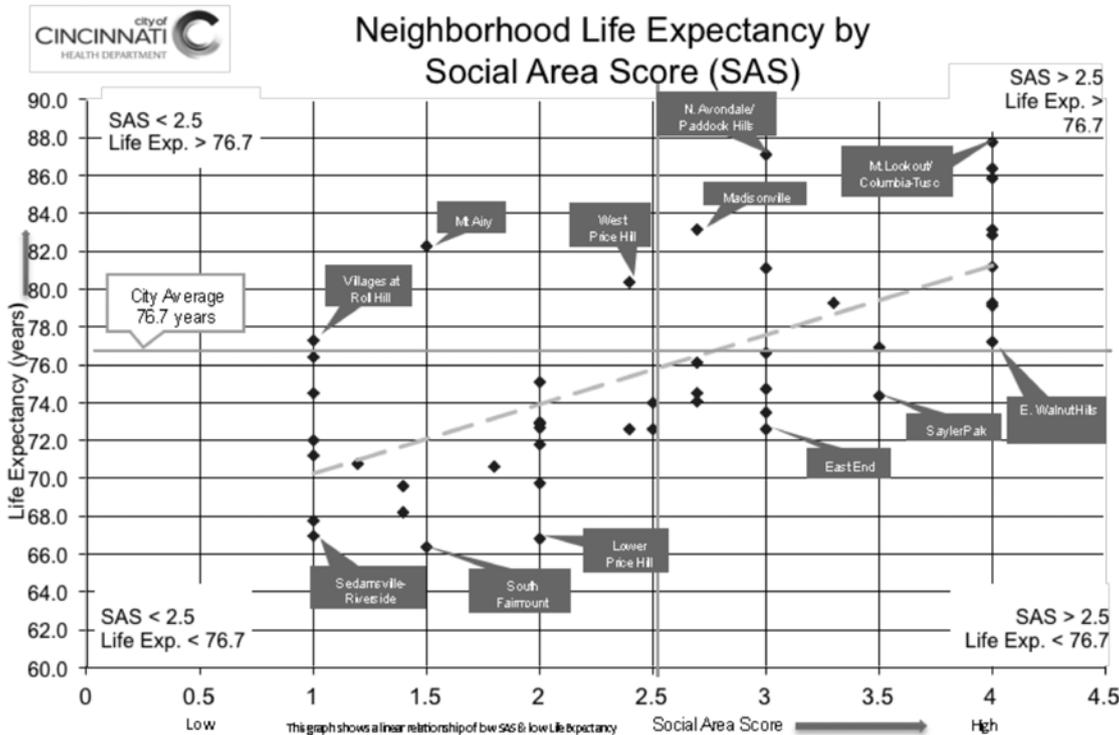
The University of Cincinnati has published a report titled “The Social Areas of Cincinnati: An Analysis of Social Needs, Patterns for Five Census Decades,” Fifth Edition 2013 (8). The report’s census tract specific analysis included a socioeconomic status classification index based on five indicators: education (less than a high school education), median family income; occupation (percent of workers in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations); family structure (percent of children under the age of 18 years living in married-couple family

households), and crowding (percent of housing units with more than one person per room).

Cincinnati Health Department staff used the socioeconomic status classification index to create a composite “Social Area Score” that included the department’s life expectancy findings. The Social Area Score

graph below documents that differences in neighborhood’s social environment reflect vulnerable ecology deficiencies – health inequities – among different neighborhoods. The possible factors that may contribute to the differences are:

1. Socioeconomic status: education, employment, and income;



2. Built environment: housing, water, and air quality;
3. Access to health care;
4. Healthy food systems;
5. Genetics;
6. Culture and acculturation;
7. Discrimination: race, class, gender, and sexual orientation;
8. Adverse social conditions

Extreme inequality reduces quality of life, life expectancy, and social cohesion.

There's is no one "Theory of Everything" approach to attaining health equity, but consistent with the American Public Health Association's "health in all policies" campaign, we believe that there is a feasible pathway to social equity for Cincinnati. This pathway is through more equitable representation of Cincinnati residents among the workforce that is doing construction projects in Cincinnati.

The upper limit to the bottom quintile of household income is \$17,000; poverty rate for a family of four is \$23,850. The lower limit for the middle household income quintile, known as the gateway to the middle class, is \$38,000. The City of Cincinnati is booming with construction

projects: The Banks, Interstates 71 and 75, MLK Exchange, academic health and hospital centers, Over-the-Rhine, and the Metropolitan Sewer District, to name a few. These infrastructure construction projects have a projected duration of several decades, and provide workers with a median salary of \$43,000. An equitable representation on the aforementioned projects' workforce would catapult many families out of minimum-wage poverty and into a middle-class income level within two years. The health and development impact of this workforce inclusion component will truly manifest itself in greater social equity and movement towards health for all in Cincinnati.

New York City increased its life expectancy from 78 years in 2002 to 81 years in 2012. We should expect that an economic infrastructure workforce transformation could produce similar gains in life expectancy and quality of life for Cincinnati.

### **Decision makers in social services and health systems need a health equity framework**

Advancing health equity is not primarily about equality; it is about fairness and creating opportunities to be healthy.

The health outcomes of African-Americans as well as of the general population are greatly determined by other factors, including where the person lives, their income and education, their healthcare provider experiences, and by human service agency decision makers who are responsible for the appropriation of resources.

Cincinnati's ability to benefit from available grants, capital improvement projects, and revenue opportunities is determined by whether resources are allocated or withheld by decision makers. Consider the Hamilton County Indigent Care Tax Levy funds, Needle Exchange Harm Reduction program, and the STD-HIV grant for contact tracing.

Interact For Health's Greater Cincinnati Community Health Surveys have documented that opinions about community social support vary by race, as well as a link between physical health and economic security (9). Eliminating health inequities is a daunting challenge, but one that must be addressed by agencies' chief executives, boards of trustees, and executive suite decision makers. Programs administered with a health equity framework do make a difference. Health disparities will not end in

Cincinnati without social justice interventions outside the health care setting, programs and efforts that eliminate health and human underdevelopment and social inequities.

## **Conclusion**

### **Achieving a social equity pathway:**

"Improving the health of Americans and eliminating health inequities will require a seamless integration of public health, with its focus on population and clinical medicine, with its focus on the individual. The present unfortunate emphasis and funding of clinical medicine must be reversed and investments must be made in primary health care and local public health services."

— *Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH, chief medical officer, Cook County, Illinois Department of Public Health*

We have presented a public health intervention, a surveillance, and care coordination model that expands on the demonstrated Cincinnati Health Department-University of Cincinnati Medical Center infant mortality rate improvement experience. And we have sought to advance the understanding that evidence-based strategies do not simply collect "data," but develop programs that use

the data to qualitatively improve maternal and infant health.

We understand that the top barriers to health equity are exposure to violence; access to transportation to employment and service agencies; access to child care services; a job that pays a living wage; poverty; and the lack of diversity and social justice orientation by top decision makers.

### **Recommendations**

What must be done to achieve health equity across all of Cincinnati?

1. A commitment to support activities that operate to eliminate health inequities must be developed by governing bodies, boards of trustees, and key decision makers.
2. Home visitation, care coordination, and surveillance works (10). Locally, the efficacy of home visitation in reducing infant mortality has been documented with a decade of evidence by Every Child Succeeds and most recently by the Cincinnati Health Department's First Steps Program.
3. Institutionalize home visitation and care coordination protocols, hospital discharge protocols, and protocols for education interventions.
4. Hold health care institutions more accountable for measurable changes in community outcomes. Quality improvement efforts at low-performing hospitals could produce a colossal benefit in eliminating health disparities in key indicators such as infant mortality rates. Reduce elective deliveries. Don't perform elective deliveries before the 39th week of gestation without a medical reason. Currently, U.S. insurance companies reimburse hospitals for neonatal intensive care unit care. We should also provide incentives for hospitals, providers, and client-community stakeholders to prevent early births.
5. The stakeholder entities for improvements in maternal and infant vitality must partner in a coordinated cooperative manner along with client and parent groups.
6. The Affordable Care Act's expansion of public and private insurance must not be curtailed. Consistent coverage beyond Medicaid ensures that women receive vital pre-conceptual coverage to improve their health even when they are not pregnant.
7. Cincinnati's poverty rate must be reduced to no greater than 15 percent of the overall and child populations. This reduction can be accomplished through access of parents to living wage employment; appropriate

education, quality preschool care and education for all children, decreased grade retention and dropout rate; job preparedness training, apprenticeships, and opportunity; guaranteed income floor that isn't below livable wage rate for city employees or businesses that contract with the city; creation of a master plan for moving families out of poverty; and determining and providing solutions to the root causes of racial, ethnic, and geographic disparities.

The Infant Vitality Surveillance Network First Steps public health model — which includes interventions that addresses environmental, economic, and social factors, and takes into account the community's values — has produced a community-city wide impact. We have presented evidence that this model can achieve health equity in infant vitality. Moreover, the public health model has the potential to impact maternal and infant populations on a large scale through systemic and structural change.

Secondly, we have offered a case for social equity — eliminating chronic poverty, and achieving a healthy Cincinnati for all. In

summary, eliminating health inequities in infant vitality and developing pathways out of poverty are daunting challenges, but ones that must be confronted by public health. The responsibility falls especially on those health departments situated in low social economic urban communities.

“I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.”  
— *Fannie Lou Hamer*

## References

- (1) “Essentials of Public Health 2007,” Jones and Bartlett, Publishers; Bernard J. Turnock, Editor
- (2) Health Equity Definition – The absence of systematic disparities in health based on social disadvantage or advantage. It is when everyone has the opportunity to “attain their full potential” and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social position or other determined circumstance.” See also Maseru, N. “Advancing Health Equity through Public Health Policies” in *Community Engagement, Organization, and Development for Public Health Practice*, F. Murphy Ed. 2012

(3) See Life Expectancy in Cincinnati Compared to Ohio as a Whole, prepared by Camille Jones, M.D., MPH and Justin Blackburn, Ph.D. Complete data is available on the Cincinnati Health Department's website [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/)

(4) The First Steps Program is a partnership that connects with mothers and their babies in the targeted 19 zip codes, regardless of income or insurance status, and provides access to health services, pre-natal and postpartum health education, care coordination, and home visitation.

The first component of the First Steps Program is surveillance — data collection and analysis.

The second component is the coordination of care across all health partners including hospitals, community health centers, home visitation agencies, and Cincinnati Health Department. The participating hospitals (University of Cincinnati Medical Center and The Christ Hospital), and the home visitation

agencies provide five interventions to those mothers who reside in the target zip codes. The interventions are safe sleep, assuring the patient has a medical home, depression screening, enrollment in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) federal nutrition program, and breast feeding education.

The third component is increased access to education and care. Expectant mothers receive prenatal care, including information on quitting smoking, drug/alcohol abuse, and proper nutrition. New mothers receive standardized education on safe sleep habits, domestic violence prevention, and breastfeeding techniques. Postpartum mothers are assured home visits from a community health worker or skilled nurse as well as depression screening and assistance with any transportation issues and doctor's appointments.

(5) The Cincinnati Health Department is a participant in the Ohio Institute for Equity in Birth Outcomes, referred to as the Ohio Equity Institute (OEI). Cincinnati's health department is in the company of eight other local health

departments in Ohio, all of which are committed to working with our communities, taking steps to improve overall birth outcomes, and reduce the racial and ethnic disparities in infant mortality. Co-chairs are Lisa Holloway and Kelli Kohake.

education, social justice, and civic engagement. “State of Black America 2014. One Nation Underemployed: Jobs Rebuild America,” Page 14.

See also, the Gini Index – a measure of income inequality.

- (6) See “Pediatrics,” March 2008
- (7) The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) established a human development index (HDI) which combines three indices: life expectancy at birth, education, and a decent standard of living. In 2010 the index was adjusted to account for inequality: Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index. *The Economist: Pocket World in Figures*, Pages 28 and 29, 2015 edition.

The National Urban League established an Equality Index. The index creates a statistical snapshot of African-Americans annually and tracks any changes that have occurred since the index was created in 2004. The data is broken down into five broad categories: economics, health,

- (8) “The Social Areas of Cincinnati: An Analysis of Social Needs,” Fifth Edition, 2013, Michael Maloney; Christopher Auffrey; School of Planning, University of Cincinnati, United Way/University of Cincinnati Community Research Collaborative.
- (9) 2013 Greater Cincinnati Community Health Status Survey. A series of surveys commissioned by Interact For Health and administered by Jennifer Chubinski. Complete survey results are available at [www.interactforhealth.org/greater-cincinnati-community-health-status-survey](http://www.interactforhealth.org/greater-cincinnati-community-health-status-survey).
- (10) The District of Columbia expanded a home visitation program for pregnant women; the infant mortality rate dropped from 14.05 (2005) to 7.86 (2010).

The Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act provided funds for local projects ultimately meant to lower the nation's death rates at birth. During the 1920s, Cincinnati was the lone location in Ohio where a Sheppard-Towner grant was used to fund care for

African-American mothers and babies.

The Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Act research found there were different effects on white and non-white populations:

One standard deviation of spending	IMR Reduction for Whites	IMR Reduction for African-Americans
Spending on Child's Life	1.5/1000	No statistically significant effect
Health and Sanitation	3.8/1000	No statistically significant effect
Nursing Visits	1.2/1000	8.7/1000
Health Center Constructed	1.9/1000	8.4/1000
Prenatal letters	0.2/1000	No statistically significant effect

## Appendix: Tables

Table 1

### Life Expectancy at Birth, by Neighborhood Cincinnati, 2001-2009



Neighborhood	Life Expectancy
South Fairmount	66.4
Lower Price Hill	66.8
Sedamsville/Riverside	67.0
Camp Washington	67.8
Avondale	68.2
Walnut Hills	69.6
West End	69.8
Over-the-Rhine	70.6
East Price Hill	70.8
South Cumminsville/Millvale	71.2
Evanston	71.8
North Fairmount/English Woods	72.1
Northside	72.6
Corryville	72.6
East End	72.6
Linwood	72.7
Carthage	72.9
Bond Hill	73.0
Evanston/East Walnut Hills	73.5
University Heights	74.0
Fairview/Clifton Heights	74.1
Sayler Park	74.4

**Table 1 (continued)**

Winton Hills	74.5
Mt. Auburn	74.5
Hartwell	74.7
Roselawn	75.1
Spring Grove Village	76.1
Westwood	76.1
Riverside-Sayler Park	76.5
Kennedy Heights	76.7
CBD-Riverfront	76.9
East Walnut Hills	77.2
Fay Apartments	77.3
Pleasant Ridge	79.1
Oakley	79.2
Clifton	79.3
West Price Hill	80.4
College Hill	81.1
California	81.2
Mt. Airy	82.3
Mt. Washington	82.9
Madisonville	83.1
Hyde Park	83.2
Mt. Lookout	85.9
Mt. Adams	86.4
North Avondale/Paddock Hills	87.1
Mt. Lookout/Columbia Tusculum	87.8
<b>Cincinnati Overall</b>	<b>76.7</b>

**Table 2**

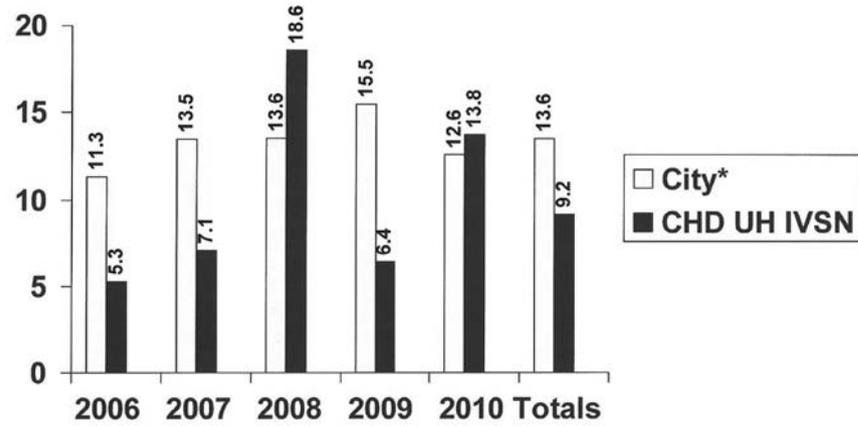
Infant Mortality Rate by Zip Code  
 2007/2010 to 2013 Comparison  
 City of Cincinnati\* & Select Hamilton County Zip Codes

ZIP CODE	NEIGHBORHOOD	2007 to 2010	2013	2013 Deaths*	2013 Births*
45219	Mt. Auburn, Clifton Heights	32.2	12.3	1	81
45237	Golf Manor, Bond Hill, Roselawn & Amberly Village	22.6	45.9	4	87
45203	Queensgate	22.6	0.0	0	51
45229	Avondale, N. Avondale	20.7	12.0	2	166
45224	College Hill	20.2	0.0	0	117
45223	Mt. Airy, Northside & Millvale	19.4	16.0	3	187
45214	Fairmount, West End	18.8	32.2	3	93
45202	Over the Rhine, Mt. Auburn	18.7	15	2	133
45216	Hartwell, Elmwood	18.3	49.2	3	61
45206	Walnut Hills	17.5	16.4	2	122
45204	Price Hill	16.8	10.4	1	96
45225	Cumminsville, Millvale, Fairmount & Westwood	15.9	18.5	5	270
45207	Evanston	14.7	14.1	1	71
45232	Winton Place, Winton Hills, Northside	13.4	12.3	2	162
45205	Price Hill	13.1	17.9	5	280
45233	Saylor Park, Delhi	11.3	30.3	1	33
45220	Clifton, CUF	8.6	9.9	1	101
**45249	Montgomery, Symmes Township	8.3	23.1	3	130
**45215	Woodlawn, Lincoln Hts, Wyoming, Lockland, Reading & Arlington Hts	8.3	5.6	2	356
45211	Westwood, Cheviot	8.0	19.8	6	303
45238	Covedale, Delhi	6.9	17.3	5	289
45213	Pleasant Ridge, Kennedy Heights	6.8	27	2	74
45208	Hyde Park	6.6	0.0	0	190
45227	Fairfax, Mariemont, & Madisonville	6.6	12.0	1	83
45230	Mt. Washington, Anderson Township	6.6	10.9	1	92
45209	Oakley	2.0	9.4	1	106
45226	East End	0.0	0.0	0	57
45228	Mt. Washington, California	0.0	0.0	0	0

\*Census Tract Population Data \*\*Zip Code Population Data

Table 3

## Cincinnati City Infant Mortality Rate



Source: Cincinnati Health Department 2012  
University Hospital 2012  
Hamilton County Public Health 2012



**Table 4**

## Percent of Children Born Premature in Cincinnati By Source of Care and Race 2010-2011

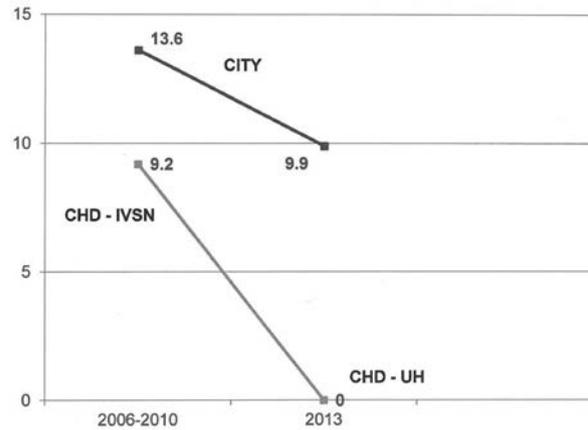
	African-American (%)	White (%)	Hispanic (%)	All Births (%)
CHD/UH Infant Vitality Surveillance Network	12.1	5.0	6.5	9.4
All Cincinnati Health Care Providers	19.6	12.9	16.5	14.0

Source: March of Dimes, April 2010  
Cincinnati Health Department 2012  
University Hospital 2012



**Table 5**

### CINCINNATI CITY INFANT MORTALITY RATE 2006 - 2013



SOURCE  
Ohio Department of Health, Vital Statistics  
Cincinnati Health Department, Vital Statistics



**Table 6**

## Cincinnati Health Department Prematurity Prevention Cost Savings

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
CHD Preterm births	72	74	43	52	46	37
CHD Preterm birth rates	16.7	15.9	8.0	11.0	11.0	8.5
CHD Preterm births prevented		-2	29	20	26	35

Five Year Period Actual NICU Costs Saved (108 Births)= \$16,200,000 - \$31,860,000

Source: Cincinnati Health Department 2014  
University Hospital 2014



**Table 7**

## INFANT MORTALITY RATE BY RACE Selected Ohio Jurisdictions 2012

City	African-American IMR	White IMR	Total IMR
Akron	12.7	6.3	8.7
Canton	17.3	7.5	9.6
Cleveland	15.7	11.8	12.9
Columbus	13.8	5.8	8.5
Dayton	13.8	8.6	10.3
Toledo	13.9	8.5	10.3
Youngstown	24.9	6.5	17.9
Ohio	13.6	5.9	7.2
Hamilton County	18.4	5.5	7.8
Cincinnati	12.6	6.1	9.9
Cincinnati Health Department	0.0	0.0	0.0

SOURCE: Ohio Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics & Cincinnati Department of Health, Office of Vital Records and Statistics.  
All infant mortality rates calculated per 1,000 live births for the jurisdiction of residence.



*Noble A-W Maseru, Ph.D., M.P.H., is the Health Commissioner for the City of Cincinnati Health Department, a position he has held since February 2006.*

# People most affected by disparities in health must lead corrective effort

By Dwight Tillery

Health disparities are well documented and have been a persistent social justice issue in this nation for more than 100 years. By its own admission, the U.S. Government revealed that it had tracked the health of all citizens and knew full well of the great disparities that existed among minority populations.

Booker T. Washington discussed the deficiencies in Negro health in 1895 at the Atlanta Exposition meeting. In 1899, W.E.B. Du Bois, in his book called the “Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study,” wrote a psychological study of Negroes that included their health. In 1903, Du Bois discussed the declining health of Negroes post-slavery in his book “The Souls of Black Folk.”

Fast-forward to today in Cincinnati.

In the city, African-American men live an average of 63.8 years, exactly 10 years less than white men. Black women live an average of 72.4 years, white women 79 years.

National rates for harmful conditions and diseases are mirrored in Cincinnati. African-Americans are 40 percent more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic whites, with a 30-percent increased risk for heart disease and a 60-percent increased risk for diabetes. It is clear that African-Americans and Latinos in Greater Cincinnati bear the burden of sickness and premature death from health disparities as defined by 10 preventable risk factors and diseases.

In this area, the nonprofit Center for Closing the Health Gap in Greater Cincinnati, founded in 2004, focuses on two of these health factors: obesity, as it provides a predisposition to chronic illnesses; and infant mortality, because Hamilton County

has the highest rate of black babies dying before their first birthday in the nation. The infant mortality rate for African-Americans in the county is 18.4 per 1,000 live births, compared to 5.5 for whites.

The causes of the existing health inequities go beyond the basic level of accessing quality health care.

In fact, access to quality health care only accounts for 20 percent of the social determinants of health.

Thirty percent of these determinants are behavioral, such as tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, diet and exercise, and sexual activity.

Ten percent of what determines good or bad health is attributed to the physical environment of communities, such as the quality of air and water, and the housing and transit conditions.

The largest category of social determinants of health is the social and economic factors that account for 40 percent of one's overall health quality. These factors include education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety.

Health, as it is, is a combination of internal and external factors coming together to impact the individual and the community. The existing health inequities must be addressed through a holistic approach that recognizes the needs of the individual and the needs of the community. Health equality will remain elusive as long as well-intended social and health organizations and governments continue the utilization of a top-down approach. Health disparities are often driven by the social conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play.

The demand for healthier lives must come from and be led by those who are directly impacted. The responsibility of health organizations and governments is to collaborate with the populations that are most impacted. Unfortunately, too many organizations are involved only until grant funds are depleted. The effort disappears when the grant money dries up. This cycle leaves the minority populations in the exact position from which they started. In order to have long-term sustainability, the impacted communities must take the lead and own the process to address barriers within their communities, such as access to healthy foods. Through addressing barriers such as

this, our vulnerable populations can make strides to changing their health.

A 2012 report by the National Urban League Policy Institute (underwritten by Walgreens Corporation) found that African-Americans have higher levels of illness, disability, and death, and continue to pay a disproportionately high price for health disparities. African-Americans account for \$54.9 billion of the total \$82.2 billion in health care costs and lost productivity. The cost of health disparities is simply too high.

Here at home, the Center for Closing the Health Gap's mission is to lead the effort to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in Greater Cincinnati through advocacy, education, and community outreach.

Our work is based on the principle that the people most affected by health disparities must lead the movement. People living in low-income neighborhoods will formulate their interventions and own their progress. Our Grassroots Mobilization Model engages, advocates, and empowers community movement to build a culture of health.

Our approach is to engage and empower African-Americans, Latinos, and white Appalachians to live healthier lives by developing solutions through Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). We also initiate solutions at the policy level, and collaborate with health care organizations to develop and implement evidence-based interventions and innovative programs to deliver our mission.

Our community-driven prevention strategy then informs the implementation of our interventions.

The Do Right! Health Campaign, founded in 2008, has reached 20,000 people to reduce family obesity. The Block-by-Block Model of lifestyle modification has expanded to 36 households in Mount Auburn. The Healthy Corner Store Network consists of 17 stores in nine neighborhoods that have increased their stock of fresh fruit and vegetables. The Health Gap's signature event is the Health Expo, now held annually in Washington Park in Over-the-Rhine. Since its origin in 2003, the expo has reached 60,000 people and provided 22,500 free health screenings.

For more information on the above programs and others, please go to the Health Gap's website, [ClosingtheHealthGap.org](http://ClosingtheHealthGap.org).

*Dwight Tillery is founder, president, and chief executive officer of the Center for Closing the Health Gap. He became the first African-American popularly elected as Cincinnati mayor in 1991.*

# Affordable Care Act will work if newly insured focus on prevention

By Roosevelt Walker III

Several months ago, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* posed the question: “Will Obamacare swamp minority physicians with patients?” May I say that African-American physicians do not view our service to the African-American community as a burden. On the contrary, it is a privilege for us to serve African-American patients, be they affluent or indigent.

As physicians, we are acutely aware of the discrepancies in health care, which continue to adversely affect African-American and other underrepresented minority populations. However, with the implementation of President Obama’s Affordable Care Act, we can now systematically address the causes of the discrepancies.

The statistics are daunting. The Centers for Disease Control announced — based

on statistics from 2011 — that the infant mortality rate for Ohio was the fifth worst in the country. Moreover, the infant mortality rate for African-American infants in Ohio was the worst in the country. African-Americans have higher cancer rates than any other racial or ethnic group. We have the highest incidence of stomach, liver, prostate, and colon cancers. African-American women are 40 percent more likely to die from breast cancer than white females. African-American adults are twice as likely to develop diabetes. The Latino population, as well, has higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and cancer of the cervix than the non-Hispanic white population.

As of March 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that 2.3 million African-American adults and 4.3 million Latino adults had gained coverage under Obamacare, not to mention 6.6 million white adults.

To ensure the success of the Affordable Care Act, the newly insured must now become active participants in their health care. The focus is now on prevention of the severe complications of medical illnesses. Our mission is to empower our patients and help them understand that they must take responsibility for their health. We want to keep patients healthy and functional and avoid hospital admissions. Patients must choose a primary care provider and make appointments to see their providers at regularly scheduled appointments. This requirement also means scheduling appointments for colonoscopy screening for colon cancer, prenatal care, Pap smears, mammograms, screening for prostate cancer, well-child examinations, and childhood immunizations. President Obama's Affordable Care Act provides coverage for all of these services.

Achieving diversity in the health care workforce must also become a priority in order to insure the success of the Affordable Care Act. The Department of Health and Human Services stated that "diversity in the health care workforce is a key element of patient-

centered care." Even when medical care can be provided to underrepresented minority populations, treatment can be inadequate and ineffective if there is a cultural disconnect between patients and providers.

Shifting a portion of the health care focus to preventative care through community awareness and education will be an important component to ensuring the success of the Affordable Care Act. In addition, it is incumbent upon U.S. medical schools to increase the numbers of African-American physicians in this country because, "the ability of the health care workforce to address disparities will depend on its future cultural competence and diversity." U.S. medical schools must become as diligent and committed in their efforts to recruit African-American medical school faculty, residents, and medical students as the athletic departments at their respective universities are in the recruitment of African-American athletes.

*Roosevelt Walker III, MD, is president the Cincinnati Medical Association.*





*“What happens in early childhood...  
serves as the foundation for future  
learning.”*

**EDUCATION**

# Cincinnati Schools must help black students move beyond dream

By Vanessa Y. White

The expansion of accountability policies in education has led to proliferation of publicly available data. Each year, the school district and the community await the Ohio Department of Education's school report card results and weigh them as the measure of how well our schools and our youth are doing.

Overall, the news was not complimentary. According to an August 2014 article in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, the latest state report indicates that during the 2013-2014 school year, only 15 of Southwest Ohio's 49 school districts avoided Ds and Fs on their state report card, a worse performance than the previous year when 19 districts avoided Ds and Fs. Cincinnati Public Schools received almost straight Fs. A few districts, including Mason and Wyoming, got nearly straight As.

At some level, a slight decline in performance was to be expected. That year was the second under Ohio's new accountability system, which state officials claim is more transparent and detailed than in past years. In that regard, Cincinnati Public anticipated it would see some slippage from the mix of Cs, Ds, and Fs it had previously obtained as it adjusted to new methods of accountability. The district's high point was a C for its overall performance index, which is a calculation that measures student performance on the Ohio Achievement Assessments and Ohio Graduate Tests in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and 10th grades. The score was the highest of any of the seven other large urban districts across the state.

It is important to note that despite this year's dip, gains have been steady over the course of the past five years and that a great

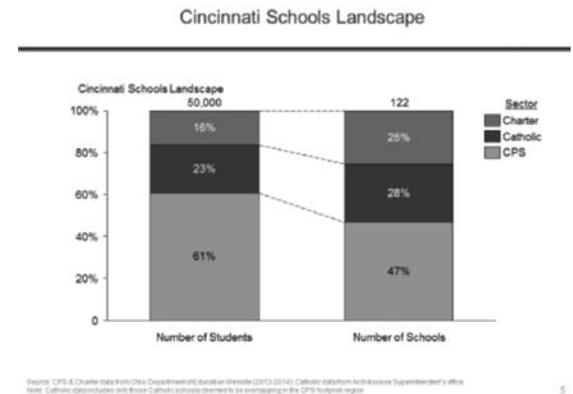
deal of hard work and unceasing effort at the district- and school-buildings level have made that possible. However, the intensity with which the community responds to these latest results will determine the level of success going forward. Certainly, a greater sense of urgency will be required than has accompanied the results to date. The entire community must move beyond simply taking notice of an annual news story about the state report card. It must provide sustained focus on the state of K-12 education in Cincinnati, the quality of the education that students are receiving, and how prepared they are when they graduate.

This focus is particularly necessary for African-American students who tend to lag behind other students, especially when black students are living in poverty.

Nearly 50,000 school-age children live in the city of Cincinnati. About 33,000 students, preschool to 12th grade, attend Cincinnati Public's 55 schools — 39 elementary, 12 secondary, and four K-12 buildings.

Of the 33,000 students, about 63 percent are African-American, and 73.4 percent are from economically disadvantaged families.

The four-year graduation rate for Cincinnati Public is 73.6 percent, compared to the state average of 82.2 percent. Of the 17,000 students who do not attend Cincinnati Public schools, 8,100 attend charter schools; they are publicly funded primary and secondary schools that operate under a contract with the state that exempts them from some of the laws that apply to other public schools. The remaining students attend private and parochial schools.



The question that needs to be asked by the community and families is whether K-12 systems are truly delivering on the dream of African-American students gaining access to a quality education — which is still the

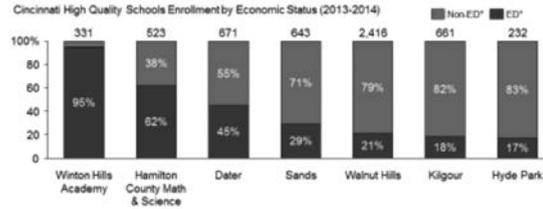
ticket to an enhanced quality of life and a promising future. This accountability is especially important as school districts are turning to the public for more resources and increased support to implement new reforms. The community must take greater direct authority and responsibility for determining what resources need to shift and what approaches need to be pursued.

A K-12 education is compulsory, so we know these children are held accountable for attending school. However, the community's expectations must exceed that requirement. Indeed, they must go beyond even what the state reports on an annual basis. The question is this: Is the quality of the K-12 education our students are receiving worthy of supporting the community's hopes for its youth? The community must demand evidence of whether the K-12 education our students receive adequately prepares them for college or career in a manner that motivates them.

Fortunately, new data are being tracked that provide a basis for this higher level of community scrutiny. One insight is the level of focused attention being given to improving the schools where most African-American and low-income students attend. For instance, according to an education working group, a limited number of transformational schools in the city serve those who need it most. Of the seven schools in Cincinnati that the group labeled high-performing, only two serve predominantly low-income students. This fact means that too few students from families of modest economic means are receiving the educations that they deserve. Indeed, only 2 of 10 students in Cincinnati who attend a district or charter school are at a high-performing school. That math means some 31,000 are in medium- or low-quality schools. Some schools are on the cusp of meeting the definition of high-performing but fall short due to the state's value-added growth measure. It looks at the difference between measures of the student's achievement from year to year.

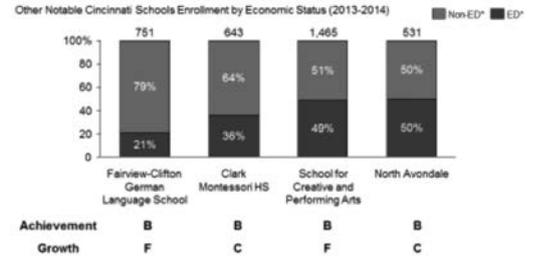
There are a limited number of transformational schools in Cincinnati available to the students who most need them

**Seven of Cincinnati's district and charter schools meet our definition of high-performing. Two of them serve predominantly low-income students.**



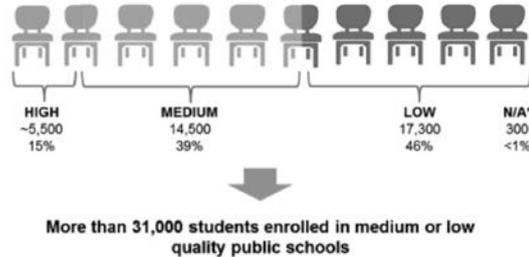
\*ED: Economically Disadvantaged \*\*Hyde Hills is "high-performing" on achievement, but not progress/growth. We chose to include it here because the progress score is based on 1P and 2P grade scores only (grades 4-5) and its economic-demographic context. While the 1P grade progress score is low, the 2P grade score is strong, signaling the 4-5P scores are likely to trend in a positive direction. Source: Schoolwise analysis.

Some schools are on the cusp of meeting the definition of high-performing, but fall short due to the Growth measure



\*ED: Economically Disadvantaged

Less than two of every 10 district and public charter students in Cincinnati attend a high-performing\* school



\*We define a high-performing school as those that receive strong state ratings in both student achievement and student growth

Another set of assessment metrics the community needs to understand with greater clarity are related to where students end up when they leave the K-12 system. The imperative of a post-secondary education beyond a high school diploma has become more pronounced over the past decade. Residents with higher levels of education – from a one-year credential to a two-year degree to a baccalaureate degree – are more likely to be employed and earn more money, according to the United Way of Greater Cincinnati's Bold

Goals, 2014. However, the strategies to ensure that African-American and other urban students are academically successful beyond high school have not kept pace. By 2020, 64 percent of Ohio jobs will require a post-secondary credential, according to Ohio Means Jobs, 2014. Currently, only 36 percent of Cincinnati residents, 25 years and older, have some college or earned a bachelor's or associate degree.

The community must pay greater attention to understanding where Cincinnati children go to college. How prepared are they to succeed when they get there? Do they persist to earn a degree? And if they do, does it lead to a promising career? These are questions the community should be asking so that we can discuss needed solutions. The data that provide answers to these questions is sketchy, though some clues exist. For starters, while not much difference shows in the graduation rate between African-American and whites, blacks students still lag behind.

See: <http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/Pages/District-Report.aspx?DistrictIRN=043752>

According to Cincinnati Public Schools data, the majority of Cincinnati Public school graduates attend the University of Cincinnati — and most of them go to its Blue Ash campus — and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College.

Indeed, the vision is that every student in Cincinnati graduates from high school prepared for success in college and career. The reality is that in order to transform education outcomes in Cincinnati, an environment of high expectations and greater demand and support needs to be created. That process means all local colleges and universities must be accessible to all children and that success becomes the inevitable achievement. The current rates of remediation suggest that this is not the case.

Here are supporting statistics for 613 first-time college students who graduated from Cincinnati Public Schools:

- Percent of entering students enrolling in a public university or university regional campus: 83.
- Percent of entering students enrolling in a community college: 17.
- Percent of entering students taking developmental math or English: 44.

- Percent of entering students taking developmental math: 39.
- Percent of entering students taking developmental English: 15.
- Percent of entering students taking developmental math and English: 11.

The economic stability of individuals, families, and region depends on delivering a high-quality education that leads to a promising career for African-Americans and other urban youths. Good local jobs exist. Even though 46 percent of the city's population is African-American, the region's top companies lack diversity in their workforce at the most skilled levels. Not all these jobs require a college degree, but all do require strong skill sets, and some post-secondary credentials. Significant opportunities for work and income exist inside city and county borders, but less than 25 percent of city jobs are taken by city residents, according to the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, 2012. Stubborn gaps remain in the urban core, where poverty and unemployment rates are higher than in the region as a whole.

### **Where to go from here**

An audible community conversation about

how to accelerate improvement and raise achievement must be sparked and sustained.

More important, the conversation must move to the development of realistic strategies that are endorsed by and driven by community stakeholders. Our K-12 schools must continue to set new expectations as they move forward with programs that engage the entire community in the success of our young people. Local universities have to create a new normal of being ready to embrace students at various stages of academic preparation in order to retain them and graduate them.

Cincinnati Public Schools has put some excellent strategies in place, such as dual enrollment courses in partnership with Cincinnati State. What should not go unnoticed is its newest initiative, My Tomorrow. My Tomorrow touts itself as a future-focused vision for education. The district envisions that within six years 100 percent of all seventh graders will graduate from high school prepared to actively pursue their chosen career path. The initiative, which combines increased rigor and the latest technology, claims that it reimagines schools in such a way that it believes will

fuel an enhanced educational experience. It bases its necessity on the fact that the world in general, and the workforce in particular, continue to change rapidly.

There's more. According to Education Trust, an education advocacy organization, some schools across the nation are educating African-American students to high levels of achievement. In 2012, at George Hall Elementary School in Mobile, Alabama — where 99 percent of students are African-American — 94 percent of the fifth-graders exceeded state math standards, and 73 percent did so in reading. No less should be expected of African-American students in Cincinnati.

Including students and families in decisions that govern their lives and their futures must be the rule, compared to labeling parents for not being present. Our schools do not always provide a welcoming environment for parents and the community. Cincinnati School Board policies dictate participation through Local School Decision Making Councils,

which help decide how the school operates; Instructional Leadership Teams, which help decide what curriculum gets taught; and the Budget Commission, which helps decide how the money gets spent.

Meira Levinson, an author with the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, has said, “Citizens with low or moderate incomes speak with a whisper that is lost on the ears of inattentive government, while the advantaged roar with the clarity and consistency that policy-makers readily heed.”

Nearly every parent and caregiver aspire to see their children achieve academically. The benefits of that transformation will go far beyond grades on the state's annual report card. They will translate into the lifelong success of our community and the overall economic stability of the region.

*Vanessa Y. White is a former member of the Cincinnati School Board, where she served as vice president and on the finance and policy committees.*

# Black students at greater risk for suspension, expulsion

By Eileen Cooper Reed

Much has been written about the school-to-prison pipeline. Simply put, students who are suspended or expelled tend to miss too many days of school, are more likely to be truant, are less likely to achieve, and are more likely to drop out, and end up with delinquency and criminal records. School disciplinary policies and practices can certainly contribute to this phenomenon. In some instances, school discipline processes push a student directly into the juvenile justice system, for example, a school fight resulting in an arrest.

In light of the recent tragic deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and, closer to home, John Crawford III, in a Walmart store in Beavercreek, Ohio, we are devoting this article to investigating the effects of suspension and expulsion on African-American students — in general — and specifically in Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS).

I served on the Cincinnati Board of Education for two terms – eight years. During that time, the board asked me to represent it on the Council for Great City Schools. The council commissioned the staff to investigate the achievement, or lack thereof, of black male students across this country. The initial result of that investigation was “A Call for Change: Providing Solutions for Black Male Achievement” (2012). An important part of the work included whether, and to what extent, disparate disciplinary treatment of African-American males was occurring and contributing to black male student failure. The report found significant differences in the incidence and severity of discipline for black male students even when there was no real objective difference in the behavior displayed by them and white students.

That finding is also strongly supported by most of the recent research on disparities,

including that completed by researchers with The Equity Project at Indiana University, which also suggests more targeted research and investment:

- Students of color, especially African-American males and students with disabilities, are at higher risk for suspension and expulsion, and such disparities impact females of color as well.
- Out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and school-based arrests place students who are disproportionately represented at increased risk of a variety of negative school and life outcomes, including academic disengagement, dropout rates, and incarceration.
- Promising systemic interventions that reduce exclusionary discipline are emerging, but we need to create interventions and practices that specifically target reduction in disciplinary disparities.
- New investments and commitment to understand the extent of, and reasons for, disparities for some groups, and interventions and practices that create greater equity are needed if we are to address African-American student success.

In fact, a report completed by the U.S. Department of Education reveals that disciplinary disparities begin as early as preschool. While black children constitute only 18 percent of public preschoolers, they comprise almost half of the students suspended. And, according to the Discipline Disparities Collaborative in a March 2014 report, “New research continues to find no evidence that use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion is due to poverty or higher rates of misbehavior among black and Hispanic/Latino students — rather, available evidence continues to show that students of color are removed from school for similar or lesser offenses compared to their peers.”

Frankly, it is shocking to me that these results occur and that we are not so imminently motivated to change what is happening. Why should suspension even be an option for pre-schoolers? Nevertheless, the data clearly indicates that significant strategies exist all along the public school route and that they start as young as 3 years of age.

And though we know that black males suffer the most stark differences when it comes to

## Preschool Suspensions

BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER

ENROLLMENT



SUSPENSIONS



ENROLLMENT



SUSPENSIONS



SHEKNOWS

Suspensions represent preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension  
Source: United States Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

addressing their in-school behavior, black girls are also far ahead of their counterparts in both the incidence and severity of disciplinary action. A 2014 report completed by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the National Women’s Law Center found that “overly punitive disciplinary practices... disproportionately push African-American girls out of school and increase their involvement with the juvenile justice system.”

U.S. Department of Education data shows that during the 2011-2012 school year, approximately 1 of 8 African-American girls were suspended in pre-K through 12th grade. This rate was six times the rate for white girls, “higher than any other group of girls and also higher than white, Asian and Latino boys,” according to the NAACP report. So, while the current trends tend to dwell on our male children of color, conditions in our schools clearly indicate that we need to investigate what’s happening to both our African-American male and female students when we discuss disciplinary disparities.

## Discipline Disparities in Schools

Even though African-American girls make up only about 17 percent of total female student enrollment in the U.S., they are much more likely to be punished than their classmates.

Percentage share of disciplined female students, by race (2009-10)



Source: Education Department

NOTE: Due to rounding and multiple punishments, numbers do not equal 100 percent.

NATIONAL JOURNAL Graphic

### The local story

Before analyzing Cincinnati Public Schools data to see how African-American students have fared, let's see what going on in the state of Ohio. In 2012, the Children's Defense Fund's Ohio office completed an investigation of the disparities in out-of-school suspension rates between black and white students across the state. The Children's Defense Fund

also did an analysis of the eight large urban districts. The subsequent report concluded that the disparity in the largest urban district ranged from 1.9 to 13.3 (Cincinnati's was the latter number).

"Overall, the disparity factor is 4.0, somewhat higher than the national average," the report reads. As usual, Ohio is

a bellwether state and is uncanny in some of its statistical reflections of the nation.

With regard to Cincinnati Public Schools, we might get a basic handle on its demographics. According to the Ohio Department of Education, the district's enrollments for the last three years were: 28,719 in 2011-2012; 29,959 in 2012-2013; and 30,421 in 2014.

African-American students comprise a majority in the Cincinnati Public Schools at approximately 63 percent of the student population. Almost 26 percent of students are white.

One of the ways to compare disciplinary actions experienced by students of different races is to measure the disciplinary actions

### Cincinnati Public School Enrollment by Race and Gender

Race	Gender	2011-2012	% total enroll.	2013-2014	% total enroll.	2013-2014	% total enroll.
Asian	Female	157	.5%	182	.6%	205	.7%
	Male	111	.4%	143	.5%	162	.5%
Black Non-Hispanic	Female	9,423	32.8%	9,554	31.9%	9,555	31.4%
	Male	9,345	32.5%	9,618	32.1%	9,712	31.9%
Hispanic	Female	416	1.4%	508	1.7%	557	1.8%
	Male	432	1.5%	519	1.7%	597	2.0%
Amer. Ind. Alaska Native	Female	10	.0%	14	.0%	23	.1%
	Male	0	0	0	0	18	.0%
Multi-racial	Female	788	2.7%	848	2.8%	888	2.9%
	Male	769	2.7%	842	2.8%	882	2.9%
Pacific Islander	Female	0	0	13	.0%	15	.0%
	Male	0	0	11	.0%	14	.0%
White Non-Hispanic	Female	3,600	12.5%	3,783	12.6%	3,904	12.8%
	Male	3,654	12.7%	3,915	13.1%	3,885	12.8%

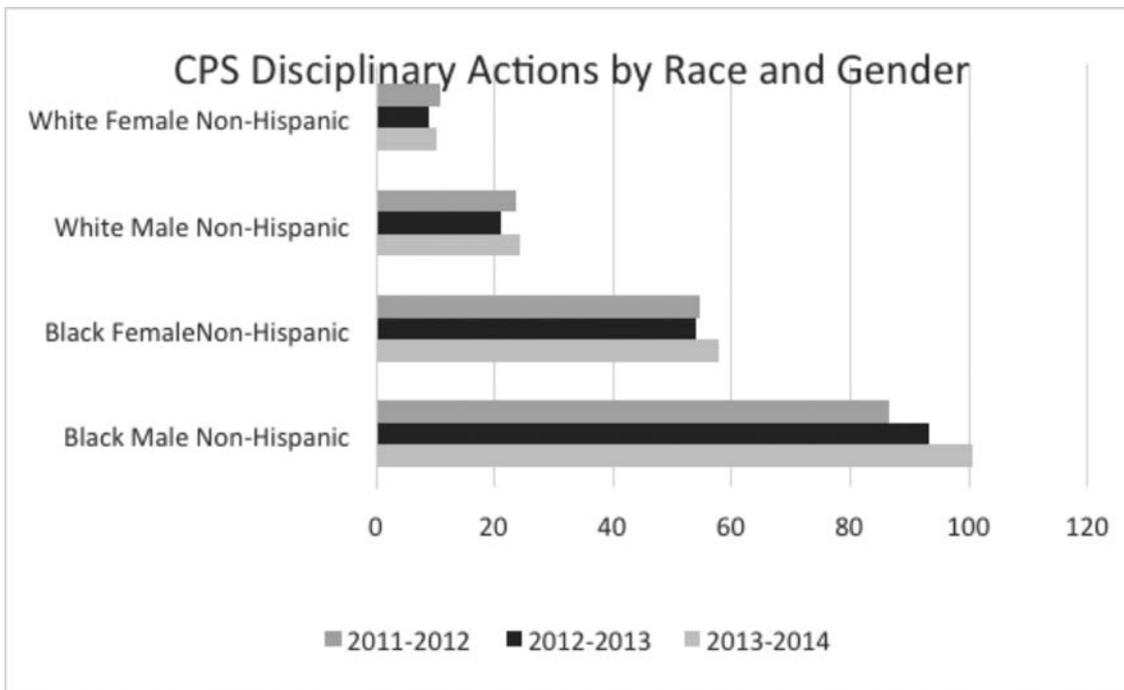
Data compiled from ODOE

per 100 students in a district. When doing so for that, here is what the data says about African-American and white students:

The chart visibly depicts the considerable difference between black and white students enrolled in Cincinnati Public. Not only were black male students four times more likely to

be disciplined in 2014 than white males, black females were more than twice as likely to be disciplined as white males. The disparities are stark and the trends consistent.

The disparate trends are even more evident when we consider the number of out-of-school suspensions per 100 students by race.



**CPS Out-of-School Suspensions by Race and Gender Per 100 students**

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Black Male	4.7	3.8	2.5
Black Female	2.6	1.8	1.3
White Male	.5	.5	.7
White Female	.3	.2	.1

There is good news here. You can see that in each of these three years, the rate of suspensions decreases for all students, except white male students in 2013-2014. The other news is that the disparities are even more pronounced here. Black males are greater than nine times more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than white males, and black females are at least five times more likely than white males. Similar to the male comparison statistics, black females are almost nine times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts. These statistics reveal that though black children are more prone to be disciplined generally, they are particularly apt to be disciplined more severely.

So, in the first instance, disciplinary actions occur far too often against black students,

male and female, with 107 incidents per 100 black male students in 2014 being the highest. On the other hand, though the rate of out-school-suspensions appears low, the difference between black and white students is quite extraordinary.

**The Cincinnati Public Schools approach**

As most school districts do, Cincinnati Public has a code of conduct which enumerates guidelines for expected student behavior and possible actions to use when infractions may occur. The code is reviewed annually and modified as needed. I am not attempting to analyze or assess the code but documenting it as the basis on which discipline is administered.

About 10 years ago, a district-wide discipline committee formed to “discuss solutions to a growing problem of suspensions and expulsions,” according to Mayerson Academy documents. After researching other models across the nation, the Cincinnati Board of Education adopted the **Positive School Culture** model.

“A primary goal of (the positive model) is to avoid suspensions and keep children in school,” Mayerson Academy documents

read. The implementation of the positive model by high schools have resulted in a much lower rate of disciplinary actions. At one elementary school, Roselawn Condon, incidents that would have resulted in suspension dropped from 75 to four with the leadership of a new principal and faithful implementation of the positive model. A somewhat smaller districtwide discipline committee still convenes to monitor disciplinary actions and processes.

**Alternative to Suspension (A2S) and Alternative to Expulsion (A2E)** are key components in the implementation of Positive School Culture. When students are not operating successfully at the school site, they are referred to one of these programs. A2S and A2E purport to provide academic instruction, counseling and social skill instruction to students who attend.

While the positive model appears to have had some overall impact on disciplinary actions and suspension, it seems to have had little impact on the disparity between black and white students. The ability to implement the code of conduct and Positive School Culture effectively is one potential key to addressing the disparities that exist.

### **Recommendation**

Based on this cursory analysis of data and my previous experience on the Discipline Committee and Board, I only have one recommendation:

No one person can resolve the myriad issues related to the disciplinary disparities that exist in Cincinnati Public. I recommend the district convene another districtwide discipline committee with a specific charge, among others, to mine the data more deeply to determine where the specific problems exist; review the code of conduct thoroughly; gain an understanding of Positive School Culture — what works, what doesn't and why; assess cultural competencies of staff; and, finally, make recommendations to the board that might relieve the disparities that exist. The committee should represent a cross-section of Cincinnati Public Schools and the community. I highly recommend including students in some way.

*Eileen Cooper Reed is a retired attorney and former two-term member of the Cincinnati Board of Education, where she served as board president in 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2013.*

# Quality education, care before age 6 set foundation for success

By Stephanie Wright Byrd

“It’s easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

— *Frederick Douglass*

This provocative statement from one of our nation’s foremost intellectuals on human rights and social reform sums up, in simple terms, the reason it is critically important to focus on the earliest years of an individual’s development. What happens in early childhood, from as early as the prenatal period until 6 years of age, serves as the foundation for future learning and development.

This article focuses on the current state of African-American children in Cincinnati, specifically children ages birth to age 6. Many factors influence the development and outlook for black children in our community. I am highlighting four: kindergarten readiness; access to quality early learning

programs, such as child care, preschool, and Head Start; an important measures of health – infant mortality; the significant underlying influence of being poor.

In keeping with Frederick Douglass’ principle, noted researchers such as Nobel Laureate economist James Heckman have shown that investing in the early years of a child’s life will create better outcomes for the child in several areas: academic performance, increased earning potential, less reliance on public assistance, and reduced involvement in criminal activity. Early learning opportunities create a strong foundation for future success. The community and larger society benefit from these early investments, too, in terms of reduced costs in remedial and special education, lower costs associated with public assistance and the justice system, and increased revenue from higher earnings taxes. These benefits outweigh the cost and are

far greater than benefits from interventions later in life.

Despite these proven facts and evidence that nearly 90 percent of brain development occurs in the first five years of life, the nation has inadequate policies and makes insufficient investment in the education and development of young children in our community. Early learning and development — when done with appropriate educational focus, sufficient financial support, and with nurturing from trusted and caring parents or other caring adults — results in children who are more likely to thrive, grow, and become positive contributors to their communities.

Here is the basis of work by the local United Way’s Success By 6 program and its many partners – to improve the early childhood system, encourage investments in programs that stimulate early learning and development, and to ensure that children have access to high quality services so they are ready to succeed when they begin school. When done well for all children, we will achieve the community Bold Goal of 85 percent of children prepared for kindergarten by 2020. In contrast, when not done well, it creates an uneven

playing field for children, many of them African-American, and limits them and our community from reaching their potential.

In its recent publication, “Being Black Is Not a Risk Factor: A Strengths-Based Look at the Sartre of the Black Child,” the National Black Child Development Institute provides a compilation of reports on the conditions of African-American children and their families — portraying enormous strengths in the face of disparities in education, financial resources, health, and cultural inclusiveness. These articles point out the importance of focusing on the early years and the influence of multi-dimensional issues such as poverty, employment, and access to quality early childhood education. These conditions are present and influence the outcomes and performance of African-American children in Cincinnati.

### **Kindergarten readiness**

Data collected from the state’s Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRAL) shows progress has been made in the number of children who are ready for kindergarten. The assessment is a 29-point instrument that measures reading readiness. Local experts determined that a score of 19 indicates the

child is on track. In Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS), kindergarten readiness increased from 44 percent in 2007 to 57 percent in 2013, an increase of nearly 30 percent. This data illustrates that when children are prepared for kindergarten, they are more likely to read proficiently in third grade. In fact, 91 percent of kindergarteners in 2009 who scored between a 24 and 29 on the 29-point kindergarten entry assessment were also proficient or higher in reading when they reached third grade in 2012.

Yet the trends tell a different story for African-American and low-income children in the urban core. The gap in readiness between these children and their white counterparts shows that income significantly influences readiness for low-income children.

More than half — 59 percent — of the 3,100 kindergarteners were African-American in Cincinnati Public Schools in 2013-2014, the most recent year for which data is available. Seventy-seven percent of the children — 2,400 — were low-income, meaning they qualified for the federal free- or reduced-priced lunch program. The largest percent of low-income kindergarteners — almost 69 percent, or 1,660 — were African-American.

And, in fact, more than 90 percent of the African-American kindergarteners were low-income students. The average score on their kindergarten entry assessment was 18.6, compared to an average score of 24.2 for white children in the “other-income” category — a 23.2-percent difference.

Additionally, there were 170 African-American children whose household income made them ineligible for the lunch program. Eligibility for lunch program does not mean these children are affluent. In fact, once a family of three exceeds approximately \$36,100 in household income, they are no longer eligible. Needless to say, “other income” is a broad category that includes families on both ends of the income spectrum — from those nearly eligible for the lunch program to those who would be considered wealthy. The average score of “other income” African-American children was 21.4 — which places them above the “ready” mark — but with a 13-percent gap from “other-income” white children.

### **Access to quality early learning programs**

Early learning programs have many names — child care, nursery school, preschool, and Head Start. An important distinction among

programs is their level of quality, which varies based on factors such as staff qualifications, class size and learning environment. It is difficult to know if children have had a quality preschool experience prior to kindergarten – the data are not easy to collect, and the level of quality is often unknown.

State quality rating and improvement systems, such as Step Up to Quality in Ohio, help parents identify programs that meet state quality standards. Still, in Hamilton County, only 30 percent of eligible programs participate in this voluntary system. Extensive research indicates that quality early learning makes a difference in school readiness for young children. This is evident in Cincinnati Public Schools kindergarteners and particularly in low-income children, where participation in the district's high-quality preschool is a strong influencer of kindergarten readiness.

Of the 1,830 African-American children in Cincinnati Public kindergarten in 2013, about 22 percent, or 410, were able to attend preschool in a district-operated program. The vast majority, 1,238 children, did not attend its preschool, and their participation in other programs was largely unknown. Keeping in

mind that 90 percent of African-American kindergarteners in Cincinnati Public are low-income, the data show that with district-provided preschool, children from low-income households score 14 percent higher in school readiness than low-income children who did not attend. It's likely that the gap is even higher if better identification of other quality preschool participation.

The limited access to quality preschool, given its proven ability to increase a child's chance of success, is an unacceptable situation. State and federal funding for these programs is inadequate to meet the need, resulting in an estimated 5,000 3- and 4-year-old children being left out in Cincinnati. At the same time, access to the city's Head Start program, operated by Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency, and serving only half of eligible children, has been recently cut by almost 600 slots. The matter is made worse by low eligibility levels for the state's child-care subsidy, which is not available to families with incomes greater than 125 percent of the federal poverty level — \$24,400 for a family of three. The inability for children to participate in programs that will change the trajectory of their lives is

unacceptable and unjust. It is at the heart of the advocacy efforts of Success By 6 and the specific goal of the Preschool Promise, a local effort to make two years of preschool available to all 3- and 4-year-old children. As a community, do we want to build strong children or repair broken men?

### **Health**

Of the many health indicators that provide a window into the status of young children, none is as frustrating as the high rate of infant mortality among African-American babies. The fact that black infants are less likely to experience their first birthday is a startling commentary on lost potential. Infant mortality not only tells us about the status of our youngest children, it gives us as a general indication of the overall health of a community.

This issue is covered in great detail in the Health section of this report.

### **Being poor**

The impact of being poor or living in a low-income household are a common denominator in each of the outcomes described in this paper. Kindergarten readiness, access to quality pre-school, and

infant mortality are intensified when viewed through the lens of poverty.

This section briefly looks at the prevalence of poverty or growing up in a low-income household for our community's youngest citizens. Based on data from the American Community Survey, provided by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati, there are 24,850 children under the age of 6 in the city of Cincinnati; 52 percent, or 12,854, are living poverty.

African-American children make up 47 percent of the total population of children under the age of 6, but the poverty rate for these children is 74 percent. Disparities in family poverty rates are also disturbing.

According to the same data, 14,550 families with children under age 5 live in the city; 50 percent are African-American. While the overall poverty rate is 45 percent for families with children under age 5, the rate jumps to 68 percent for African-American families. On average, each month in 2014, 66 percent of children under age 6 who received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) were African-American. Likewise, 78 percent of the children

receiving the state's subsidy for child care were African-American.

It may be stating the obvious to say that being poor is not an outcome. It's a condition that makes it difficult for many African-American citizens to experience the benefits of being in this community and this country. For young children, it means having fewer experiences that enhance their development and get them ready for school. It means fewer opportunities for early learning programs that will assure they are reading at grade level. It means inadequate access to health information for mothers, which could assure healthier birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality. It means having a playing field that is uneven from the start.

### **Conclusion**

The information presented in this article may lead one to believe that the status of African-American children in our community is bleak. Admittedly, significant obstacles exist that the entire community must rally to solve if we are to be the great place we aspire to be. But, despite the challenges and trends, it is important that we consider the resiliency of African-Americans and our community to take the

needed steps and improve the outcomes for our children.

Community members are strong, adaptable, and have cultural pride and determination. Families, schools, and organizations are working together to find solutions.

In Cincinnati, many collective efforts are at work, such as Success By 6. The philanthropic community, including the local United Way, and the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, are focused on systemic issues that have led to the undesirable outcomes discussed earlier. An adage says that "when you know better, you do better." In Cincinnati, we have history of doing better. Know that we know full well about our children, let's continue to do better.

"Free the child's potential and you will transform him into the world."

— *Maria Montessori*

*Stephanie Wright Byrd is executive director of Success By 6 with the United Way of Greater Cincinnati. It is a national United Way strategy in more than 350 cities across the country that works to improve school readiness.*



*“Cincinnati lost 4,500 black owner-occupied homes from 2005 to 2013. Every foreclosure represents a family that lost their savings, as well as their home.”*

# HOUSING

# Housing segregation isolates blacks in poor, high-crime neighborhoods

By Elizabeth Brown and Brandon Craig

The Cincinnati region is still among the 10 most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the United States, according to the 2010 Census. The segregation measure is trending down but very slowly.

## **Continuation of racial segregation patterns**

Unlike other major metropolitan areas in the United States, Cincinnati has not been a significant destination for immigrants in more than 100 years, so living patterns are still generally perceived as black and white. The metropolitan area is 15 percent African-American, according to 2010 Census data. Hamilton County is 26 percent African-American. And the city of Cincinnati is 45 percent African-American.

Black population is slowly leaving Cincinnati and moving to older suburbs in Hamilton County. The city lost 9,000

black residents between 2000 and 2010. The largest gains are seen in the northern Hamilton County jurisdictions of Colerain and Springfield townships, and the municipality of North College Hill. The more expensive suburbs of West Chester and Mason in adjacent Butler and Warren counties to the north also have seen an increase in black population, although not in numbers large enough to represent a significant percent of the population. The eastern and western sides of Hamilton County have not seen the same growth in black population and are still overwhelmingly white. The black families moving out of the city tend to be higher income than those remaining and more likely to be married-couple households.

While the region is still significantly segregated, a growing number of stable integrated communities have been established through time.

A study commissioned by the Cincinnati Association, based on the 2000 Census, found only 15 communities that had been integrated for at least 20 years among Hamilton County's 49 jurisdictions and Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods. But when the study was repeated based on the 2010 Census, 28 communities had been racially integrated for at least 20 years. The stability is important because a community may look integrated today but be in transition with one race replacing another in a relatively short period of time — such as what happened in the Avondale neighborhood in the mid-20th century.

Greater Cincinnati's ranking as one of the nation's most segregated is based on something called the Dissimilarity Index. It measures what percentage of households that would have to move to be equally distributed throughout the region.

The Cincinnati study of neighborhoods defined "integrated" as not less than 10 percent and not more than 80 percent African-American — plus a Dissimilarity index of not more than 65. It is important to include the percentages of African-American population because a community

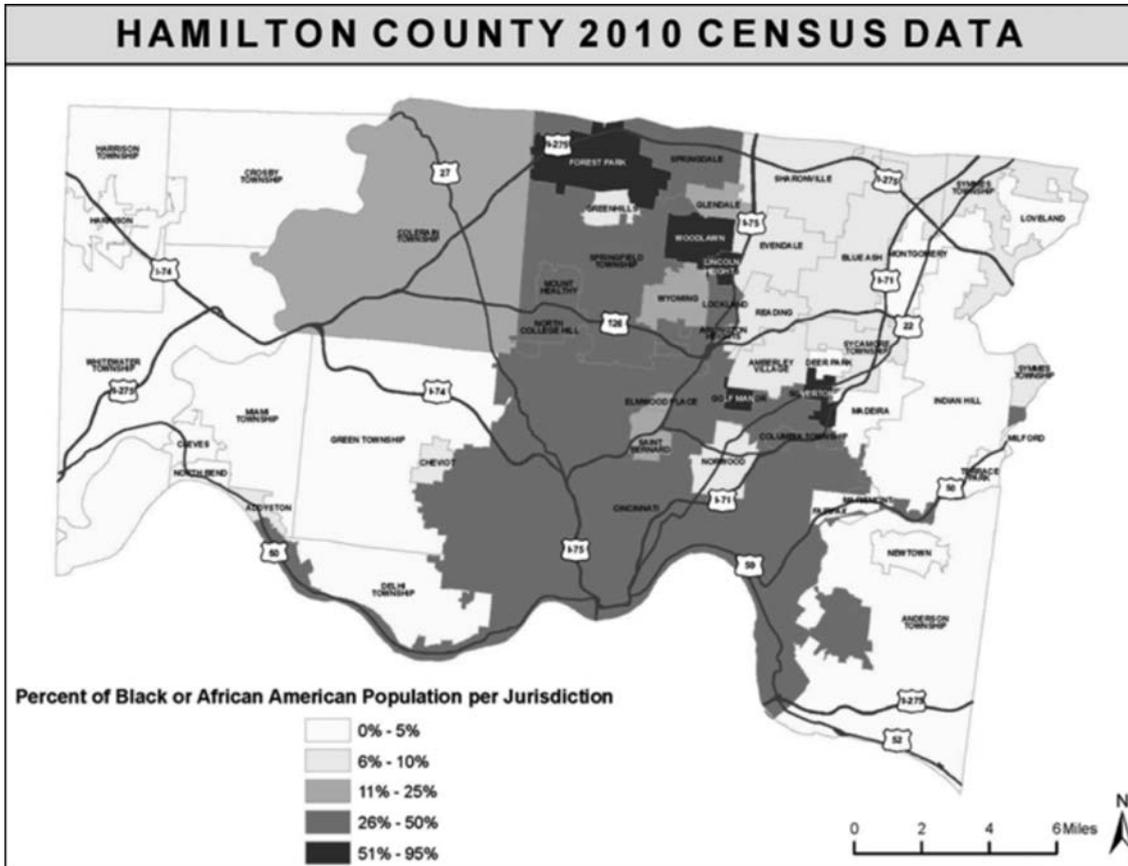
could have a very small number of African-Americans, but as long as they didn't live close to each other the community would have a low Dissimilarity Index. Using just the Dissimilarity Index, Boone County is the most "integrated" in the metro region because the few African-Americans living there are scattered throughout the county.

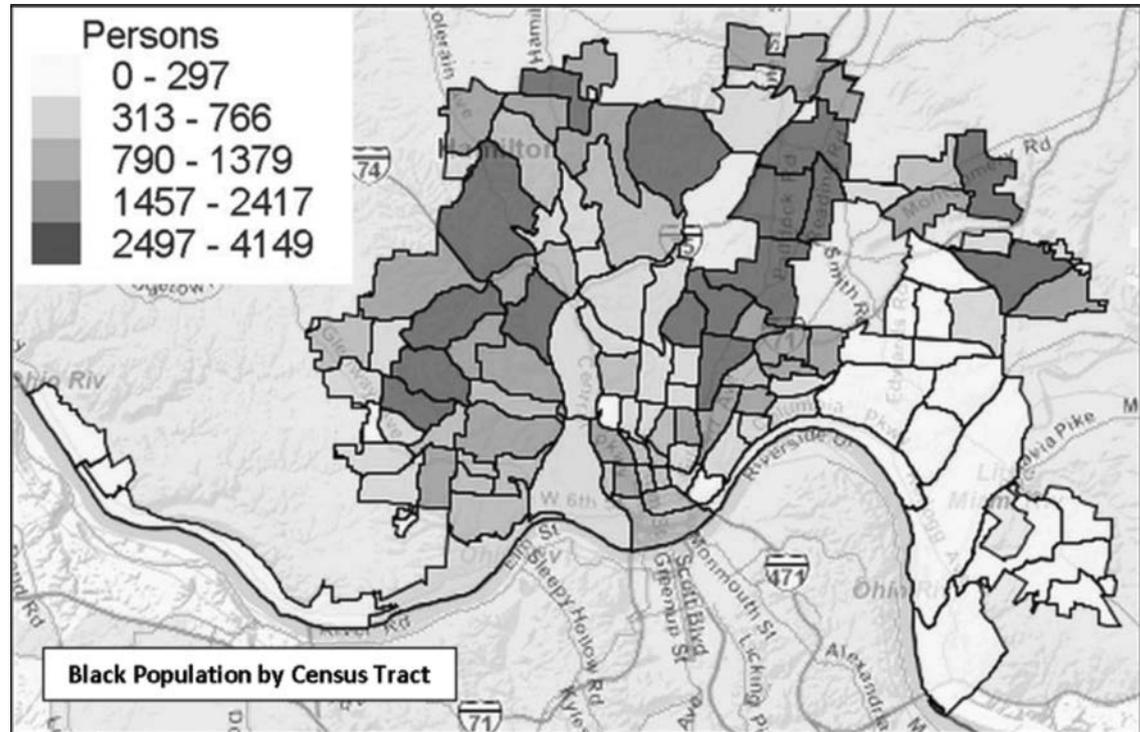
So why have the traditional patterns of racial segregation survived so long? Numerous factors affect where people live, including family income and affordability, and desire to be close to family and friends.

However, one factor that still exists is housing discrimination. Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), the private fair-housing agency that serves Greater Cincinnati, received 135 calls in 2014 about potential illegal discrimination based on race. HOME investigates the concerns, and, when supported by evidence, will assist the person in filing a formal legal complaint. Illegal housing discrimination today is hard to prove because it is often subtle. Black applicants often are turned away with a smile and told there are no vacancies; white applicants are shown vacant units. However, racial discrimination

is not always subtle. As recently as 2012, HOME helped a tenant file a complaint

about a “Whites Only” sign on a swimming pool at his apartment complex.





*City of Cincinnati, 2010*

**Loss of wealth and home ownership**

Black wealth has been significantly reduced in Cincinnati, as well as throughout the United States, as a result of the loss of homeownership during the foreclosure crisis that was a major part of the Great Recession. According to the American Community

Survey, Cincinnati registered a loss of about 4,500 black, owner-occupied homes from 2005 to 2013. Every foreclosure represents a family that lost their savings, as well as their home.

The effect on predominantly black neighborhoods is also significant. Foreclosed

properties stand vacant and bring down values for all property in the area. According to the report “In the Shadow of the Mortgage Meltdown: Taking Stock,” by the nonprofit Working in Neighborhoods, 7 of the 10 Cincinnati neighborhoods with the highest number of foreclosure sales from 2006 to 2013 were predominately African-American.

In 2014, the “Cincinnati/Hamilton County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice” identified several barriers to black homeownership: Credit standards have tightened, making it more difficult to obtain a mortgage loan to purchase a home. Data that lenders are required to publicly report shows that potential black homebuyers in Hamilton County face significantly higher mortgage rejection rates than whites, regardless of their incomes. And when they do get a mortgage, African-Americans are forced to accept a higher-cost loan. While not denying that some individual discrimination may exist, lenders say the difference is primarily because African-Americans with solid incomes often have lower credit scores and less savings or family help available for a down payment.

Another current barrier to homeownership is that, after witnessing families and friends lose everything in the foreclosure crisis, many black residents who can afford to purchase a home fear predatory lending and have a general distrust of banks. The process of getting a mortgage and buying a home is seen as too complicated and not worth the risk.

As a result, in 15-county Greater Cincinnati, homeownership rates are 74.5 percent for whites but 33.1 percent for African-Americans, according to the 2011 American Community Survey.

### **Neighborhood change**

The movement of middle-class black families out of Cincinnati has led to greater concentrations of poverty in inner-city neighborhoods: 18 percent of Hamilton County residents are in poverty, and 30 percent of Cincinnati residents live in poverty. Public housing is primarily located in inner-city neighborhoods, and more than 90 percent of Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) residents are African-American.

Families unable to access the limited supply of subsidized housing are forced into aging and often substandard properties. Forty-three percent of residential housing in Cincinnati was built before 1939. Overcrowding becomes more common because poverty forces people to double-up or house extended family members who otherwise would be homeless. It is difficult to quantify the overcrowding because the additional people in the household are unauthorized, and the original tenants face eviction if the landlord finds out.

These predominantly black communities of concentrated poverty have a host of interrelated problems that impact the lives of the residents and the children growing up there. Research clearly shows that where people live matters, affecting everything from exposure to crime, health, lifespan, and educational opportunities.

People living in low-income, predominantly black city neighborhoods have shorter average life spans than residents of affluent, predominantly white communities. For example, the life expectancy in Avondale is 68.2 years, as opposed to 85.9 years in Mount

Lookout. The overall city average is 76.7 years, according to data collected and analyzed by the Cincinnati Health Department.

The City of Cincinnati and nonprofit community development corporations have revitalization efforts underway to improve housing and remove blight. However, redevelopment has not always benefited residents of black neighborhoods.

Several Cincinnati neighborhoods praised for their redevelopment successes have experienced an increase in white residents and, as housing prices have risen, a decrease in black population. Most notably, since 2000, Over-the-Rhine lost 1,400 black residents, Walnut Hills lost 1,300 black residents, and Mount Auburn lost 1,500 black residents. At the same time, between 2000 and 2010, East Price Hill — a neighborhood west of Downtown on bus lines and with a supply of inexpensive and subsidized housing — gained 2,007 black residents and lost 5,314 white residents.

Community groups in these neighborhoods are working to ensure redevelopment does not displace current residents and that

affordable housing is produced along with new market-rate housing.

*Elizabeth Brown is the former Executive Director of Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), the private fair housing agency serving the greater Cincinnati area. She*

*previously worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.*

*Brandon Craig is Compliance Manager for Housing Opportunities Made Equal. He works with clients who have experienced illegal discrimination in housing.*



*“This attention presents a window where bipartisan reform can reduce the proliferation of criminal penalties.”*

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE

# Justice system's dependence on jail, lifelong sanctions harm community

By David Singleton

The state of Cincinnati's criminal justice system, particularly as it impacts African-Americans, presents both challenges and opportunities.

One challenge is more general in nature: society's over-reliance on incarceration to address structural social problems, such as poverty, failing schools, and the lack of economic opportunity, which often drive crime.

This problem is not unique to Cincinnati. Since the 1980s, the incarceration rate has soared nationally as a result on the national war on drugs and get-tough-on-crime rhetoric, even as crime rates have fallen. In 1982, 623,388 people were incarcerated in the United States. Today that number exceeds 2.4 million.

Ohio has seen a dramatic increase in its prison population, too. In 1980, 13,256

people were incarcerated in state prisons across Ohio. Today, more than 50,600 men and women are in our state's prisons, a 280-percent increase from 1980.

Though people who commit violent crimes deserve to be punished, too often those who find themselves behind bars have committed low-level, non-violent offenses. Incarcerating people who commit non-violent offenses does little to improve public safety while imposing enormous financial and social costs upon the community. We can, and should, do better in reducing the size and scope of the criminal justice system.

Another challenge is our local criminal justice system's disproportionate impact on the black community. Again, this problem is not unique to Cincinnati.

Nationally, African-Americans constitute approximately 14 percent of the population

yet comprise 40 percent of the jail and prison population. Although 1 of 3 black men can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime, only 1 in 17 white men can expect to do the same. In Ohio, African-Americans represent 12 percent of the population, but they make up nearly half of the state's prison population.

Similarly, although African-Americans represent about 25 percent of Hamilton County's population, they constitute nearly 60 percent of Hamilton County Justice Center's population. We can, and should, do better in reducing the overrepresentation of African-Americans in our local criminal justice system.

Another challenge is the distrust that many in the black community have for the police. No question the police serve an important function for all of us who live in Cincinnati. But African-Americans, particularly males, are too often targeted by the police, arrested, and sent to jail. And because of Cincinnati's own history of police shootings of unarmed black men, and the recent events in Ferguson, Missouri; and Beavercreek and Cleveland, Ohio; Staten Island, New York; and Baltimore, Maryland; and other communities where unarmed black men have

died at the hands of the police, the trust gap has widened. We can, and should, do better in fostering respect and trust between the police and the communities they serve.

Still another challenge is the impact collateral sanctions place on the ability of people who have been convicted of crimes to find work, support themselves, and contribute meaningfully to the community. The term "collateral sanctions" refers to a legal penalty, disability, or disadvantage imposed upon a person automatically as the result of a conviction for a crime, even if not included in that person's sentence — hence the sanction is collateral to the actual sentence imposed. In Ohio, more than 800 state laws are on the books that restrict the ability of people with criminal records to work in certain fields, many of them mandatory rather than discretionary.

These restrictions often do not take into account how long ago the offense occurred, the relationship of the offense to the job the person seeks to do, or whether the individual has been rehabilitated. Shut out of employment opportunities, many are turned away from the economy not based on the ability of the person to do the job he has applied for.

Another challenge is the mistrust many in the black community have toward the Hamilton County Prosecutor's office. Like the police, prosecutors play a very important role in our justice system. Without prosecutors, our system will not work. At the same time, the criminal prosecution of Hamilton County Juvenile Court Judge Tracie Hunter — which the special prosecutors who tried her case admitted was intended to remove her from the bench — has polarized Cincinnati, largely along racial lines, and has deepened the mistrust many in the black community have for the prosecutor's office.

But at the same time we face these and other challenges, we also have opportunities. One of those opportunities is the growing realization, by elected officials on both sides of the political aisle, that we incarcerate far too many people in the United States and that we must reduce the number of people behind bars. Ohio Governor John Kasich, state prison director Gary Mohr, and key members of the General Assembly agree that the time is now to reduce our state's prison population. We need to build on this momentum to achieve a meaningful reduction in the number of people incarcerated locally and statewide.

Another opportunity is the growing support for returning citizens — people who have spent time in prison and have now returned to the community. In 2012, Kasich signed into law Senate Bill 337, which created Certificates of Qualification for Employment, known as a CQE. They allow people living in the community who have a previous felony or misdemeanor conviction to apply to the court to lift the collateral sanction that bars them from being considered for employment in a particular field.

In addition, a state fair hiring law is pending. Based on the laws that numerous cities have passed, starting with Cincinnati's in 2010, the state fair hiring law would prohibit inquiries into an applicant's criminal background during the general application portion of the hiring process for public employees. If adopted, this bill, introduced in the Ohio House in January 2015, is an important opportunity to make it easier for people with felony records to get state government jobs. But our work must not end with the passage of a state fair hiring law; we must work to ensure that private sector employers do more to employ qualified job applicants who also happen to have a criminal record.

Additionally, despite the depressing news out of Ferguson, Beavercreek, Cleveland, Staten Island, and Baltimore, there is hope. Because of the success of Cincinnati's Collaborative Agreement, a legally enforced agreement between the City of Cincinnati, its police department, and the Cincinnati Black United Front and the American Civil Liberties Union, police-community relations in Cincinnati have improved. In fact, the Collaborative Agreement provides a blueprint that other communities can use to reform their police departments.

In sum, as this chapter will explain in more detail, the criminal justice system in the City of Cincinnati presents both challenges and opportunities. Now, is the time to face the challenges and seize the opportunities that are in front of us.

*David Singleton is executive director of the Ohio Justice & Policy Center, a non-partisan, nonprofit, public interest law office based in Downtown Cincinnati whose mission is to work statewide to create fair, intelligent, and redemptive criminal justice systems.*

# Ending over-incarceration trend will improve black neighborhoods

By Erik Crew

Increases in mass incarceration rates in the United States, Ohio, and Hamilton County have followed the same trajectory in recent decades, and they all cause disproportionate harm to communities of color.

## The national picture

The United States leads the world in incarceration, with nearly seven million people in prison or jail, on probation or parole, a 279-percent increase in the past 30 years. During the same time frame, the U.S. population increased by only 37 percent.

## The Ohio picture

The growth in Ohio's prison population in the past decades mirrors national trends.

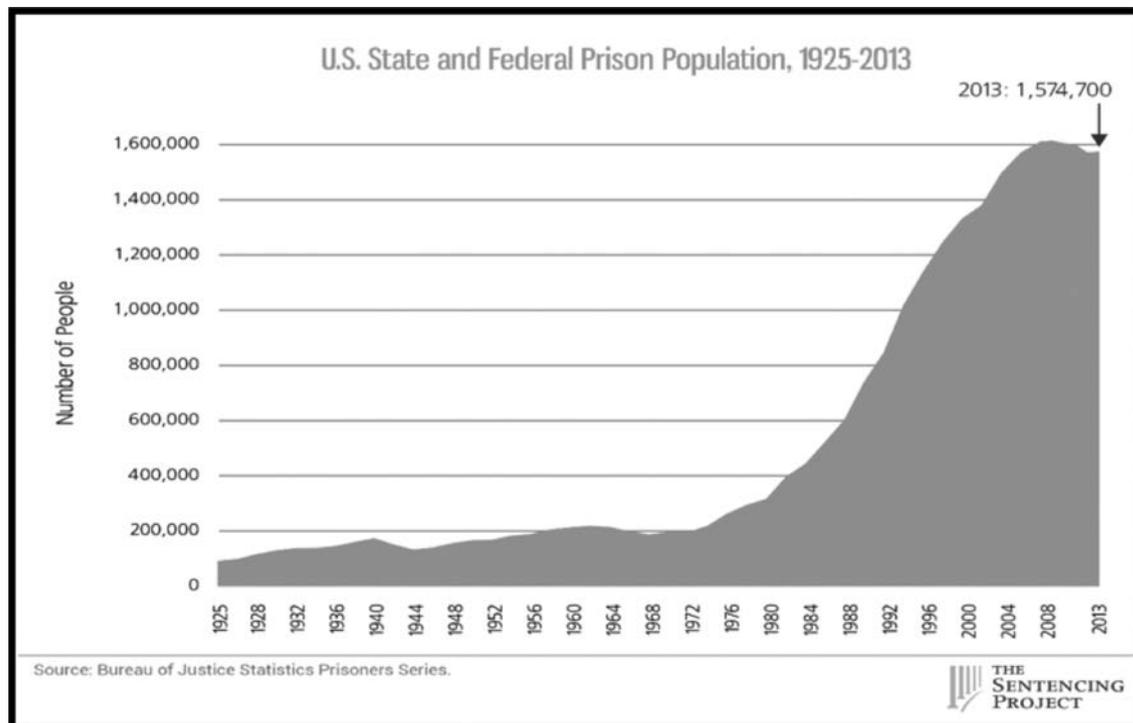
Consider the rise in incarcerated people in the context of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. In 1929, when he was born, Ohio's prison

population was 8,804. In 1955, when King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 10,483 people were imprisoned in the state. In 1963, the year he gave his "I Have a Dream" speech, Ohio incarcerated 11,644 people. And in 1968, the year of his assassination, Ohio prisons held 10,189 people. Even 10 years later, Ohio incarcerated approximately 12,000 prisoners.

But soon afterward, Ohio's prison population began to soar. By 2002, the state incarcerated 35,000 prisoners. Today, Ohio's prison population is 50,201, and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction budget is a staggering \$1.6 billion. The following chart depicts the growth of Ohio's prison system since 1929, using King's life as a reference point.

## The local picture

Mass incarceration in Hamilton County follows the same pattern we see nationally



and across Ohio. In 2002, 29,488 people cycled through the Hamilton County jail system. In 2006, that number had grown to 31,020 people, according to Vera Institute of Justice’s 2008 report “Assessment of Changes in Inmate Characteristics and Jail Management Processes in Hamilton County, Ohio.”

These are not only people with convictions, but those who have been convicted of no crime. Nationally, the number of people experiencing pre-trial detention solely because of an inability to pay bond or fees is 62 percent of the jail population, according to the Vera Institute’s February 2015 report

## Growth of Ohio Prison Population

Year	People in Ohio Prisons	Women in Ohio Prisons	People Sent to Ohio Prisons
1929	8,804	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
1968	10,189	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
1974	7,717	268	5,905
1980	13,360	598	8,329
1992	35,446	2,257	20,594
2008	51,273 (most ever)	3,724	26,995
2011	50,857	3,888	20,682
2015	50,674	4,022	Data unavailable

“Incarceration’s Front Door: The Misuse of Jails in America.”

In 2009, 756 out of the 1,240 people in the Hamilton County Justice Center were people waiting for trial; 278 of those people had been waiting for more than three months, and 81 had waited for more than six months. These waits separate them from their families, housing, and employment opportunities, and increases the chances they will plead or be convicted of a crime. Since the early 1990’s, Hamilton County has sent approximately 2,000 people per year to the Ohio prison system. In 2007, the county sent a high of 2,815 people to the state prison system.

### **The disproportionate impact of mass incarceration on communities of color**

This mass incarceration epidemic has devastated minority and low-income communities.

Though only 12.5 percent of Ohio’s population identifies as African-American, they represent more than 45 percent of incarcerated Ohioans.

Michelle Alexander, an associate professor of law at Ohio State University and author of “The New Jim Crow,” has written, “There are more African-Americans under correctional control today... than were

enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War.” In Hamilton County, approximately 60 percent of the people going through the jail system are black, while black people make up only approximately 25 percent of the county population.

### **The opportunity**

Alexander’s work in “The New Jim Crow” has been a catalyst for change and has increased awareness of the structural racism present in the workings of the justice system. As part of this growing awareness, conservative lawmakers are coming out for justice system reform, primarily from a fiscal perspective. Yet this situation presents a window where bipartisan reform can reduce the proliferation of criminal penalties that have devastated the African-American community.

Gary Mohr, director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, has made clear that his number one priority is substantially reducing the size of the prison population. The system operates at about 130 percent of capacity. The timing is especially ripe for change. Successes locally and across the country are a foundation to build on. The number of people Hamilton County sends to the state prison system

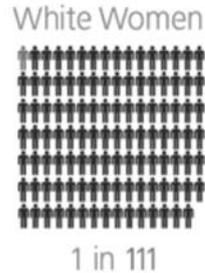
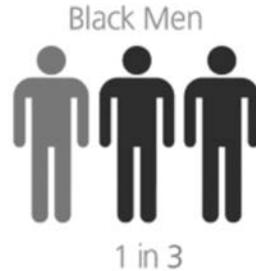
has declined for the last five years — as has the number of people cycling through the Hamilton County Justice Center.

Recent studies, including “What Caused the Crime Decline?” by the Brennan Center for Justice at the New York University School of Law, show that increased incarceration is not effective in reducing crime.

African-American communities not only experience over-incarceration but are more often the victims of crime. In the face of growing evidence, however, we cannot claim that incarceration helps. Further, many states have shown that decreasing incarceration can happen alongside decreases in the crime communities experience. The decreases may, in fact, be directly related, as fewer people under correctional control increases the number of mothers and fathers contributing to community health. We have the chance to restructure a system that cuts down on mass incarceration and produces more safety for our communities.

David Singleton, executive director of the Ohio Justice & Policy Center, has been appointed to a special committee of the Ohio General Assembly to look for ways to reduce

## Lifetime Likelihood of Imprisonment

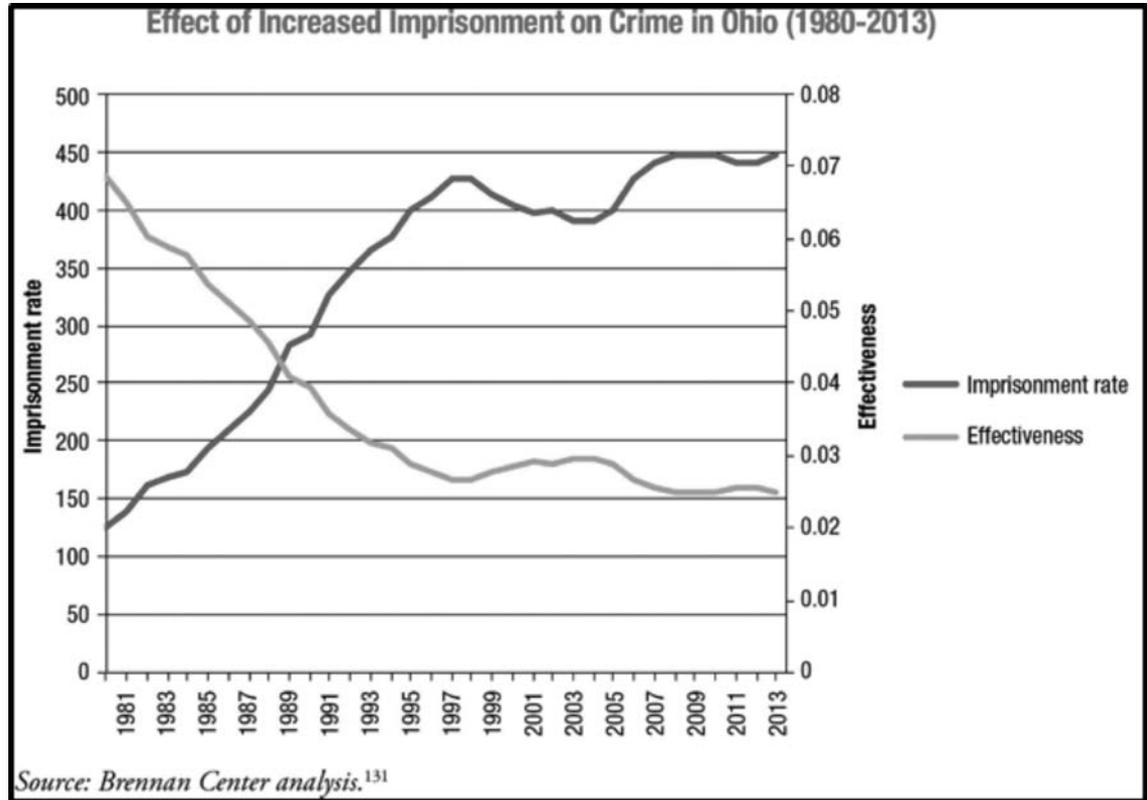


Source: Bonczar, T. (2003). *Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974–2001*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics



Ohio's prison population. The Criminal Justice Recodification Committee's goal is to enhance public safety and the administration of justice in Ohio. It will study Ohio's criminal statutes, develop a comprehensive plan for revising the criminal code, and recommend that plan to the General Assembly.

Another exciting area for change comes from ideas around restructuring the way large government agencies fund their law enforcement initiatives. As you may know, many criminal justice agencies measure success, and receive funding, based on the number of people processed through the



system. As research shows, however, the number of people arrested, prosecuted, and locked up is not a good measure of success when it comes to public safety and creating safe, healthy communities, according to the Brennan Center report “Success Oriented

Funding.” Let’s instead measure success by looking at how our agencies reduce crime rates and bring down racial disparities in arrest and conviction rates. By rewarding this kind of success rather than rewarding simply more arrests and convictions, we can

help push our criminal justice agencies to produce the kind of success we want to see.

The collection of researchers, policymakers, and advocates aware of the need for change is growing, as are legitimate opportunities for change. As “The New Jim Crow” author Alexander points out, it will take more people directly impacted by over-criminalization that endangers our community’s safety and health moving in

concert to bring an end to it. Alexander recently released an organizing-and-movement building guide to end mass incarceration, which is available to all. The Ohio Organizing Collaborative, an innovative collection of organizers and advocates across the state, has taken up the fight to end mass incarceration.

*Erik Crew is Communications Manager at Ohio Justice & Policy Center.*

# Returning citizens earn 40% less than before they went to prison

By Stephen JohnsonGrove

One in six Ohioans — about 16 percent of our available workforce — has a criminal record. That raw number is 1.9 million Ohioans. They face about 850 state laws that embody some kind of barrier to re-entry based on a criminal record, affecting employment, housing, family, financial, and civic-participation rights.

Ohio Justice & Policy Center has a database — [civicohio.org](http://civicohio.org) — that catalogs the state laws that hamper a person's effort to seek employment with a criminal record. Those laws are called “collateral sanctions,” and Ohio is the only state in the country to have such detailed, paralyzing restrictions.

Nationally, people who have been incarcerated make 40 percent less than before they went to jail, an average lost income of \$15,600 a year,

according to the Pew Center on the State's 2010 report “Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility.” This deep decrease affects their ability to support themselves and contribute to their family and community. In addition, other economic research suggests that Ohio is losing \$2 billion annually in gross domestic product — the monetary value of all the finished goods and services produced within the state's borders — because otherwise qualified workers are excluded by over-restrictive criminal-record-based barriers.

Because of the rise of mass incarceration, for more than a decade about 3,500 citizens return from Ohio prisons each year to four-county Greater Cincinnati: Butler, Hamilton, Clermont, and Warren, according to Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction data. Some 2,100 of those ex-offenders came home to Hamilton County in 2011.

Hamilton County also has 5,000 felony probationers, criminals convicted of serious crimes but sentenced to probation instead of prison; 202 live in the 45229 area code, which covers most of Avondale. The central Cincinnati neighborhood is 89 percent African-American.

Part of a larger movement among many service providers a decade ago was to be more responsive to the very large and growing needs of re-entry. Ohio Justice & Policy Center began serving the legal needs of people in the community with criminal records in 2004.

In 2007, Hamilton County Commissioners David Pepper and Todd Portune led the way in creating the Criminal Justice Commission, and it made helpful recommendations on improving justice in Greater Cincinnati. The Hamilton County Office of Reentry grew out of that commission's work. DeAnna Hoskins, a dynamic leader and returning citizen who

has a governor's pardon herself, has led that office since its inception in early 2011.

Through the work of the policy center and the AMOS Project, a faith-based justice coalition, Ohio Senate Bill 337 was passed in 2012, creating Certificates of Qualification for Employment. This law serves as a mechanism for relieving the burden of collateral sanctions and provides protection to employers from negligent-hiring lawsuits. Cincinnati was the first city in Ohio to adopt a fair hiring policy. Now, 12 cities and counties have these policies and a uniform, statewide version is pending in the legislature (HB 56, 2015).

The City of Cincinnati not only repealed its ill-conceived marijuana-possession-enhancement law, council took the highly unique step of allowing those previously convicted under that law to have their records sealed.

*Stephen JohnsonGrove is deputy director of the Ohio Justice & Policy Center.*



*“The goals of community engagement are to build trust... to improve the lives of residents.”*

**INCLUSION**

# Do terms ‘inclusive,’ ‘conservative’ mix, offer hope to African-Americans?

By Eric M. Ellis

In spring 2001, Cincinnati went through a period of civil unrest. Today, our nation is at a tipping point regarding racial injustice. What did we in Cincinnati learn from our time in the national spotlight? Have we made any real and sustainable progress?

Having invested my life’s work toward the creation of fair and equitable workplaces, schools, and communities, those and other questions regarding inclusion are of vital importance to me. The significance of inclusion was instilled in me from an early age, having been raised in a family committed to justice and freedom.

Throughout the years, I’ve often heard the city of Cincinnati described as conservative. Yet conservative and inclusive are words that are often viewed as in contrast with one another. Our conservative label, although

embraced by many, is not viewed positively by many of the diverse young people whom our community needs to attract and retain in order to be competitive in the future. People of color typically evaluate how inclusive an environment is based on answers to the following questions:

- Am I personally included?
- Do I know any people of color who are included?
- Have I heard good news about the inclusion of people of color in that city or within that organization?

There are isolated examples of African-Americans making progress regarding inclusion in Cincinnati, but on a whole, data shows that our advancement is behind that of similar cities in our region. The following facts provide insight about Cincinnati’s level of inclusion:

- City of Cincinnati population (2010 U.S. Census): 296,943

- African-Americans (2010): 133,287 (45 percent)
- Percent of change in population from 2000-2010: about minus 7 percent
- Black-owned firms in Cincinnati (2007): 18.3 percent
- Black-owned firms in Hamilton County: 10.8 percent
- Cincinnati City Council, percent African-American: 44
- Hamilton County Commissioners, percent African-American: 0

A recent report by the National Urban League in 2014, measuring income disparities between whites and African-Americans nationwide, ranked Cincinnati 73 out of 77 cities — lower than Ohio’s other major cities of Toledo, Cleveland, Dayton, and Columbus. The median household income among African-Americans in Cincinnati was \$24,272, compared to \$57,481 for whites.

More than two decades of diversity and inclusion training and consulting has allowed me to hear thousands of people share their honest impressions about fairness and equity. There is a significant perception gap between the broader community and people of color about the quality and level of

inclusion in the city. African-Americans are generally less optimistic about Cincinnati’s interest or ability to be truly inclusive. The majority community does recognize the need to be attractive to diverse individuals and groups but often lacks the strategic will to facilitate significant change.

If we look at economic and leadership inclusiveness, I would offer the following:

### **Economic inclusion**

Overall, unemployment figures have decreased significantly for workers in Cincinnati, to 4.3 percent, according to recent government figures, yet the unemployment rate for African-Americans is still in double digits. African-Americans continue to lack significant economic parity with Cincinnati’s majority community. Although, in recent years, we have had more symposiums and conference workshops on topics such as “access to capital,” we continue to lack the resource providers committed to making money available to minorities for business growth and development.

We can point to a few examples of economic inclusion, like the development of The Banks and other projects that have met

or exceeded their minority participation projections; however, the fact remains that a minuscule number of black-owned businesses are located in the Central Business District, and most of the African-Americans who have significant access to capital, can be counted on one hand.

African-Americans are currently engaged in a new discussion on the concept of wealth creation. If you look at net worth — everything you own minus what you owe, as an indication of wealth — you will recognize that African-Americans have a long way to go.

The concept of wealth creation is an important conversation to have, but the overwhelming majority of African-Americans are stuck trying to answer the question, “Can I make a livable wage?” Livable wage is defined as a theoretical wage level that allows the earner to afford adequate shelter, food, and the other necessities of life. In Cincinnati, the livable wage for an individual is calculated as \$7.89 an hour, but for a family with two adults and two children the livable wage increases to \$17.56 an hour. The median income for African-Americans in Cincinnati is \$24,272 for a household and \$15,475 for

an individual, both of which fall below basic livable wage standards.

### **Leadership and power sharing**

We have made substantial progress in leadership and power sharing at the city government level. The significant African-American population in Cincinnati of 45 percent has created an inclusive city council. Unfortunately, this is not the case within county government or from a judicial standpoint.

The high-profile prosecution of Juvenile Court Judge Tracie Hunter, an African-American female, reinforced perceptions that justice in Hamilton County is applied differently and unfairly towards African-Americans. It’s surprising that millions of taxpayer dollars can be spent to block, prosecute, and ultimately remove Judge Hunter from the bench. Cincinnati’s justice system does not appear to be color-blind.

Cincinnati continues to make steady progress regarding the inclusion of African-Americans on significant nonprofit boards. However, inclusion on paid corporate boards, is nearly nonexistent. In August 2014, Black Enterprise magazine identified

the small number of African-Americans serving on corporate boards in the top 250 U.S. corporations. There are fewer than five African-Americans serving on major corporate boards in Cincinnati.

### **Overall conclusion**

African-Americans cannot continue to measure progress, simply by how much we are included in the corporations or systems controlled the majority community. We must also measure our success in terms of our ownership and leadership of businesses and nonprofit organizations. *It's not enough any longer to sit at the lunch counter. We must own the lunch counter.*

Inclusion strategies need to be multifaceted. I would offer the following areas to consider for future improvement: African-American intra-cultural collaborative strategies; African-American entrepreneurial focus to support our own businesses; and African-American businesses focusing on meeting the needs of our community and the broader community.

Measurable inclusion strategies for areas impacting our overall quality of life in: education, corporate leadership, health

and human services, and entrepreneurial development (including access to capital).

People love to recite a quote attributed to Mark Twain, "When the end of the world comes, I want to be in Cincinnati because it's always 20 years behind the times." Whether Twain actually uttered this famous line can be debated, but what cannot be disputed is how the conservative values of our business and other leaders make it difficult to quickly embrace change. This reality makes it hard for African-Americans to be optimistic that genuine progress is possible.

I know there are many people who would enjoy arguing about how significant our small, isolated examples of inclusion successes are; this is classic Cincinnati. My hope is that we will welcome the opportunity to become more inclusive. My prayer is that we would spend less time debating who's at fault and more time implementing strategies to achieve success. African-Americans must accept the fact that we, ourselves, have the greatest responsibility for our future, so we need to make greater investments toward our own progress.

*Eric M. Ellis is President and CEO of Integrity Development Corp., a management consulting firm specializing in diversity and inclusion training and consulting. He is also an award-winning author of the book, "Diversity Conversations," (Integrity Development Publishing, first edition 2012).*

# Authentic inclusion not yet achieved in corporate Cincinnati

By Icy Williams

If all could feel, touch, see, and experience the full impact of inclusion, then people in corporate America would do business with Americans — not minorities.

Inclusion means inclusion. It means affiliation, combination, enclosure, involvement, and surrounding. It means with. Inclusion means being with one another and caring for one another. It means inviting parents, students, and community members to be part of a new culture and a new reality. Inclusion means joining with new and exciting educational concepts, such as cooperative education, adult education, whole language, computer technology, and critical thinking. Inclusion means inviting those who have been left out — in any way — to come in, and it means asking them to help design new systems that encourage every person to participate

to the fullness of their capacity as partners and as members.

The above are the thoughts of Jack Pearpoint, Lynda Kahn, and Cathy Hollands of Inclusion Press International and the Marsha Forest Centre, Toronto.

And so it is that:

- Inclusion can be the replacement word for “minority.”
- Inclusion can be the replacement for the term “supplier diversity.”
- Inclusion could be the replacement for the term “no seat at the table.”
- Inclusion can be the replacement for the term “economic development of inner cities.”
- Inclusion can be the replacement for the term “black-on-black crime.”

Diversity is “in,” much to the dismay of the defender of the past. Such cultural and political upheaval has given rise to

knowledge players in the game of social change, while leaving most people as confused bystanders, desperately hanging on to a past that is irrelevant to the future.

“Other programs are shelved because leadership decides they no longer add value.”  
— *Joset Wright-Lacy, President, National Minority Supplier Development Council*

No greater divide exists in America today than in Cincinnati’s business community. A monumental gap has emerged between the needs of the nation’s Fortune 1000 corporations and the black minority suppliers that provide them with goods and services. Many years of changes have occurred, but looking back, but much has remained the same; the same meetings, same city meetings, and same agencies trying to show a reason to exist. This situation also exists in these Fortune 1000 corporations, where many employees don’t have a sense of strategy or ownership of their company’s diversity inclusion goals.

To ensure the promise of social and economic inclusion, supplier development must be rooted in the principles of inclusion for all.

I have lived and worked in the Cincinnati area for the past 24 years and have seen the region grow beyond the city’s borders. Growing up in a small town south of Dallas, Texas, gave me insight to a lot of segregation practices in schools, the community, churches, and the job market.

Living in Green Bay, Wisconsin, sheltered me from many inclusion issues involving black and white Americans during years of social unrest across the country. Moving to the Cincinnati area in 1991 provided insights to the racial divide never known while living in Green Bay and other cities. I left briefly but returned to Cincinnati just after the riots of 2001. I tried to understand the mindset of people who had felt “left out,” “less than,” and “never good enough” to win business opportunities. What I saw was a city that painted the right image and reputation of inclusion, but beneath the surface existed a disparity across city and community boundaries.

My role within corporate America was to find ways to help make a difference in small businesses, so they could be part of a bigger opportunity, which would have positive

effects on them and their community. This included the cultural changes of an organization internally while creating the proven result locally and nationally.

My experiences show me three areas of challenge for Greater Cincinnati:

1. Knowledge to understand diversity and inclusion principles that must become a corporate business strategy imperative. It is important to recognize that behavior does not change in one simple step. Rather, people tend to progress through different stages on their way to successful change. This will create a culture within the corporate supply chain that is more conducive to the achievement of community impact inclusion.
2. Skills to develop a community inclusion plan that outlines actions that need to be implemented across social and economic boundaries. With people spending a majority of their waking hours at work, it is important to engage full communities into action plans that increase passion, drive, and commitment. This approach allows for a great deal of hands-on learning with community assistance and live coaching from experienced corporate professionals.

3. As more city government regulations are being rolled out and requests for economic evidence of viable operations accelerates, minority and female entrepreneurs must be prepared to build value and competitive advantage into their enterprises. The impending results will include new skilled workers; diverse businesses prepared to construct, renovate, and support green building; diverse consulting companies providing sustainability training and green business audit; and stronger urban communities with economic inclusion and a safer, healthier environment for all Americans.

For Cincinnati to achieve these results, top-down support is necessary for communities to make a serious inclusion commitment and reap the benefits of the harvest. With eyes and ears on America, we generally change behaviors when we know our performance is being measured.

*Icy Williams is president and chief executive officer of ATMOS360, an air cleaning systems company, in West Chester.*

# Unprecedented organization, unity needed to move community ahead

By Patricia Milton and Victoria Straughn

Cincinnati is a city with a rich history for African-Americans, which includes, but is not limited to, the Underground Railroad. Slaves from the South had to cross the Ohio River in an attempt to gain their freedom, even if it meant death. However, the city's history also has a negative side for African-Americans. Black Laws were put in place that "controlled Negroes" and harmed black prosperity and survival. These codes, along with harsh direct treatment, drove many blacks to flee as far north as Canada.

Today, Cincinnati's African-American community has made great strides in accessing high political office, but progress has not come without struggle and conflict — in 1829, 1884, 1967, and 2001 — not to mention numerous legal actions to force change upon political and police systems otherwise unwilling to bend.

Just as in war-torn countries, though, constant fighting eventually takes its toll on people because it bleeds precious time and energy that are necessary to build healthy communities. The wealth, or lack of it, of African-Americans is tied to this expenditure of resources. And, according to Ron Daniels, the relative gap between blacks and whites in terms of income and wealth is a legacy of enslavement and structural/institutional racism. Unfortunately, too many poor whites and working poor still see African-Americans as enemies instead of allies in the struggle to achieve a better quality of life.

President of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century at York College City University of New York, Daniels further states it is not possible to erase the income and wealth gap without dealing with the root cause of persistent inequality — which has severely hampered the quest for justice,

socio-economic equity, freedom, and self-determination.

To move Cincinnati's communities of color forward, we must organize and work together like never before.

The United States claims to be the "melting pot." Using the metaphor of imitation cheese slices, they do not melt well. They lack the true ingredients that allow real cheese to melt. African-Americans cannot successfully melt into American society without the root cause of racism being addressed by the larger society. In order to disrupt structural racism, we must organize around the cause of socio-economic disparity that keeps African-Americans almost frozen in time and unable to thrive.

For far too long in Cincinnati, we've known of the crushing statistics that show African-Americans suffering from unemployment rates double those of white society and high infant mortality rates.

In 2013 dollars, for example, the median net worth of white households was 13 times greater than African-Americans' — \$141,900 compared to \$11,000. The difference between

white household worth and that of Hispanics' was not as great as whites and blacks: a 10-time difference of \$141,900 versus \$13,700.

We know, too, of higher rates of black juveniles being bound over as adults and receiving harsher sentencing for petty crimes instead of rehabilitation. Much of what we are experiencing in Cincinnati is due to structural racism and our inability to hold our politicians accountable. We have a lack of strong black-oriented institutions. Too many depend on corporate money for their survival, muting their voices to speak on behalf of black citizens.

A comprehensive approach is needed to deal with the social injustice, generational social detriments, and disparities in Cincinnati's poorest neighborhoods. There must also be a shift in the thinking that causes people to shun living with people of a different income level, or people who need social services for a hand up. Like many large cities across the country, Cincinnati is economically segregated. Yet living in monolithic communities robs people of a chance to help the person living next door, across the street, or around the corner. In the words of an old Negro spiritual, "If I can help

somebody as I pass along then my living shall not be in vain.”

We must stop talking about the suffering of African-Americans in the city and begin to take specific action with economic resources, starting with efforts to rebuild the black family. It is clear from many sociological and economic studies that African-Americans face an uphill battle. The power structure of Cincinnati must be willing to face the problem with open hearts and open minds to put an end to generational poverty due to the lack of employment and the overabundance of hopelessness.

Access to jobs and job training are important keys to ensuring the attainment of a healthy, prosperous community. We must expect corporations and institutions to show social responsibility by hiring people and providing them with gainful employment. Otherwise, we will continue down a road that will simply look good on the surface but will lead African-Americans to the same economic dead end.

Increasing homeownership is key to stabilizing our neighborhoods, along with having long-term renters who are vested in the community.

In 15-county Greater Cincinnati, home ownership rates are 74.5 percent for whites but 33.1 percent for African-Americans, according to the 2011 American Community Survey.

Cincinnati is working toward a big vision with development of The Banks and the transformational gentrification of Over-the-Rhine, the latter where black population is falling as higher-income whites move in. The African-American community must be included in the planning of this vision and create opportunities by reframing norms and shaping new conversations. The black community must work to win a greater share of charitable dollars.

We have to network, build rapport, and extend ourselves — in the words of Lucy Bernholz, a visiting scholar at the Stanford University Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society — “toward the extraordinary opportunity of this moment, to go beyond episodic attention to sustained effort, beyond lip service to real change, beyond punctuated action to sustained focus.”

Here’s how to achieve sustained focus. Civil rights and Black Power movement leader Kwame Ture, once known as Stokely Carmichael, urged

us until his death in 1998 to “organize, organize, organize,” which we have failed to do. We have had many great leaders who studied systemic racism and its impact on black people. These great leaders left a blueprint for success that we have failed to follow.

It is not enough to ask our people to simply support organizations. There are far too many so-called “black” organizations that exist in name only and periodically participate in charitable events. This meager activity is not enough to create and sustain change. Very often, that level of action only aids in keeping our condition the same. These are not organizations that advocate. These organizations help only a few people but seek mainly to keep their comfortable positions and polite relationships with the larger community.

Organizing and advocating start with recruiting progressive, like-minded African-Americans and blacks of great social consciousness, people who have a sense of cultural understanding and sensitivity to the needs of our communities. We must seek out and recruit those who have the skills and leadership abilities and develop others despite our differences.

Because black communities are fragmented and exist in a state of emergency and crisis, as we wrote earlier, organizing around a unified vision of social justice is difficult. But, again, blueprints exist. Community engagement and advocacy mean you cannot dictate from the top down. Community members must have a voice in identifying the issues that negatively affect their lives. Organizers must be disciplined and able to set aside their differences to place their focus directly on community interest.

For too long, black Cincinnati has addressed issues from a reactionary position, not one that is proactive or anticipatory. We are at a disadvantage in creating sustainable solutions that can be sustained.

We must create an organization supported by information specialists who research laws and policies that negatively affect African-Americans and our communities as a whole. We must increase political education and training around structural racism, often coupled with or disguised as social classism in Cincinnati with its 52 distinct neighborhoods.

Leaders in Cincinnati — whether they be elected officials in City Hall or volunteers

in any of its neighborhoods — can motivate citizen engagement by placing a high value on the input of people as active participants in the decision-making process.

The heart and soul of our communities are the people who live, work, play, and pray together. In the spirit of collaboration, we must work toward common goals and shared values to improve the lives of the families. Establishing and maintaining good communication channels are the cornerstones for increasing the strength and resilience of our communities. Fair and equitable sharing of resources, as well as technical assistance for neighborhoods that have not seen significant investment in several decades, are necessities. The goals of community engagement are to build trust, identify new resources and allies, create better communication, and improve the lives of the residents in the neighborhood.

Good leadership knows when to lead and when to follow. The black community in

Cincinnati has not done enough to establish new laws and policies around issues of justice. We must be vigilant in our quest to create and sustain change and support each other without apology.

Our beloved ancestor Frederick Douglass said, “Power concedes nothing without a demand, it never has and never will.” And Jamaican-born Black Nationalism leader Marcus Garvey cheers us on, saying, “Up, you mighty race, accomplish what you will.” If we listen to the wisdom of our leaders, past and present, we will succeed in creating a prosperous and healthy community for generations unseen.

*Patricia Milton is president of the Avondale Community Council. Victoria Straughn is a Cincinnati civil rights and human rights activist now affiliated with the group Concerned Citizens for Justice.*

# The blueprint for inclusion: City's vitality depends on valuing all

By Bleuzette Marshall

If inclusion were a core value and practiced by every individual within every organization – industry and community – the City of Cincinnati would thrive. By definition, inclusion requires action. It implies that people, not regardless of, but because of their unique backgrounds, are invited fully to participate in a group.

Traditional work in the diversity and inclusion space has focused on finding common ground and building from there. But the latest thinking challenges organizations to build intercultural skills by acknowledging differences so individuals can employ the Platinum Rule of treating others the way they want to be treated.

Each of us can view the same painting, or even an auto accident, and provide different interpretations based on our perspectives.

So when we look at Cincinnati, relative to inclusion, mixed commentary is expected. What is indisputable are disparities across the board relative to educational attainment, access to culturally competent health care, unemployment rates, and professional advancement in the African-American community, just to name a few; yet all potentially resulting from systems riddled with exclusive practices, either intentionally or unintentionally. Despite advancements, work exists to reach some measure of parity.

This is an exciting time for the city; we have reached a tipping point. The future is literally in the palm of our hands, and our viability hinges on the decisions and collective action to build a more inclusive community.

## **By the numbers**

According to the Census Bureau, African-Americans in 2013 represented 13.2 percent of the U.S. population and are skewed younger

in age. Nationwide, 55 percent of African-Americans live in southern cities. Of those migrating south, 40 percent are between the ages of 21 and 40, and 25 percent have earned a college degree, according to demographic studies. Since 2000, Cincinnati's African-American population has declined 6.47 percent – 9,409 individuals – with noticeable reductions in the 25-44 age category. Multiple factors influence this change, including migration, especially for job opportunities, affordability, and cultural connectivity. As a community, unless this trend is reversed, Cincinnati may continue to experience a decline. Although we cannot change the climate (temperature) in Cincinnati, we can change the climate (culture) by fully embracing the tenets of inclusion.

### **Value of inclusion**

Inclusion requires transparency, honesty, and a measure of vulnerability. It satisfies the psychosocial need of belonging and connectedness. As a practice, inclusion is a vehicle to let others know we do not have all of the answers individually, but together we are better able to innovate and solve problems.

It's time for a shift. We must abandon the deficit mentality of diversity and the

notion that inclusion equates to personal loss and begin to see the intellectual and social benefits of embracing it within our organizations. The benefits of an inclusive environment ultimately make us better through the production of quality products, achieving superior results, and providing better service. In addition, inclusion is a key driver for increased market share, a reduction in turnover, increased performance and productivity, and improved community relations, according to recent studies.

### **Personality types**

The success of any initiative is dependent on those involved in the process. Professionals often experience the challenge of advancing diversity and inclusion amid four personality types: supporters, spectators, sleepers, and saboteurs. Each person is relevant, helps sharpen our skills, and can add value to our efforts.

**Supporters.** Change agents who want to make a difference are receptive to innovation and exhibit a measure of adaptability. They attend meetings and events regularly, offer their assistance and creativity in strategy development, and are eager to engage a broader audience in change.

**Spectators.** Individuals who have been around a while with limited involvement are nostalgic and can recall with accuracy when and how many attempts have been made on specific initiatives along with the outcomes. They are typically the ones saying *we've been down this road before or we never did it like this*.

**Sleepers.** Folks who have retired on the job, do enough to get by, and are probably looking for their next opportunity. These individuals represent the largest group of untapped potential. Sleepers have not kept up with the changing organizational dynamics, but are receptive to learning and networking.

**Saboteurs.** For these complainers, nothing is ever good enough, progress is always too slow, direct interaction is often challenging, and they can be an organization's public relations nightmare.

Recognizing these profiles and understanding their benefits can eliminate frustration and assist practitioners in building welcoming, inclusive, and engaging environments.

### **Developing a plan**

Competitiveness in the global marketplace is not by chance. Becoming a strong

player requires a thoughtful strategy, bold leadership, an actively engaged community, and skillful implementation. The creation of an Inclusion Council helps monitor progress and makes suggestions for improvement. Inclusion plans should focus on four interconnected areas: people, accountability, atmosphere, and community.

**People.** Talent management is the lifeline of any organization and contributes to the employee experience not only in the company, but in the city as well. Modifying traditional practices and being aggressive to recruit and retain talent is crucial to the livelihood of organizations. Partnerships with community and professional organizations like the Urban League, the National Black MBA Association, or the National Society of Black Engineers provide opportunities to identify talent through shared job postings and networking events.

**Accountability.** CEOs and other senior leaders set the tone for their organizations. Their words and actions speak volumes relative to their commitment to inclusion. The performance-management process is a key river for inclusion. The system provides a framework to attract, engage, develop,

leverage and advance talent. It requires managers to know their employees' values, work ethic, accomplishments, professional aspirations, and desired meeting and communication styles. Interactions are frequent, not twice a year for goal setting performance evaluation.

**Atmosphere.** An organization's environment can significantly influence the talent management processes. Creating an atmosphere where everyone can be and become the best versions of themselves, feels comfortable bringing their "A-game," and performs to their best abilities without being hindered by any dimension of diversity will lend to the success of the employee and the organization. Periodic surveys are good tools for gathering quantitative and qualitative data on employee perceptions and experiences.

**Community.** Inclusive practices must extend beyond the organization for enhanced community experiences. Every interaction is an infomercial about the employee and organizational values. A visible presence in the community indicates an acknowledgment of existence and an intentional effort to connect. Developing intercultural competencies allows associates

to engage effortlessly with diverse populations for service or collaboration.

### **Conclusion**

Building an inclusive environment is similar to losing weight; thinking about it does not reduce pounds or inches. It requires work. Every day. The future of Cincinnati is inextricably linked to the inclusive practices of individuals and organizations within the community. As a collective, we must lead by example in creating environments where people are valued for their unique multifaceted perspectives and contributions that both reflect and advance the diverse communities we serve.

Operationalizing inclusion will reduce, if not eliminate, structural inequities that disproportionately affect the lives, achievement, and career advancement of African Americans. Ultimately, everyone shares the responsibility for building an inclusive culture within the city – one that removes barriers and provides opportunities to learn, contribute, grow, and thrive. There are infinite possibilities to make Cincinnati more inclusive. Choose one and begin making a difference today.

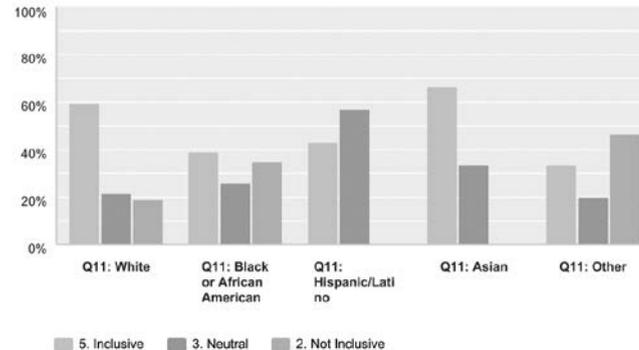
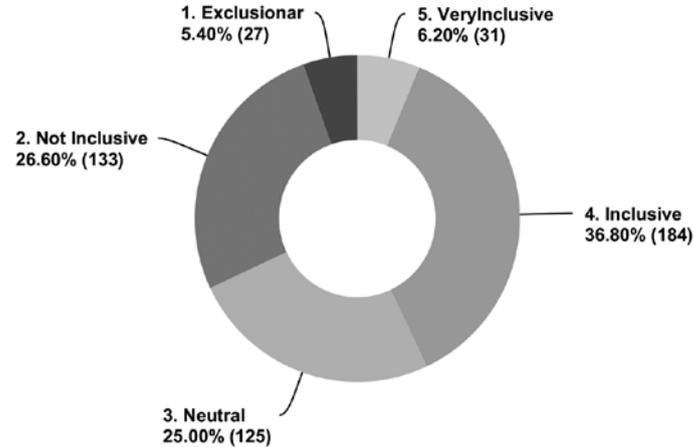
*Bleuzette Marshall is Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Cincinnati.*

# Inclusion survey results

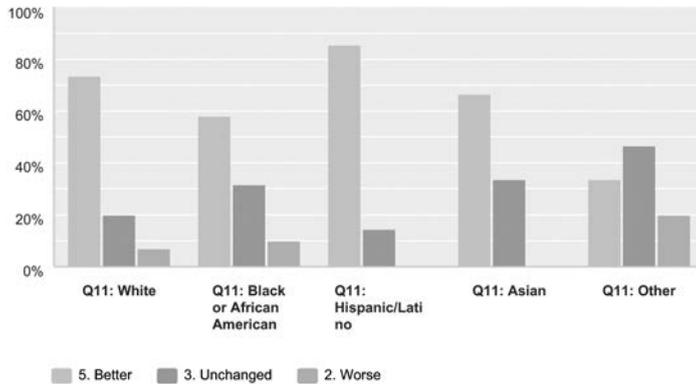
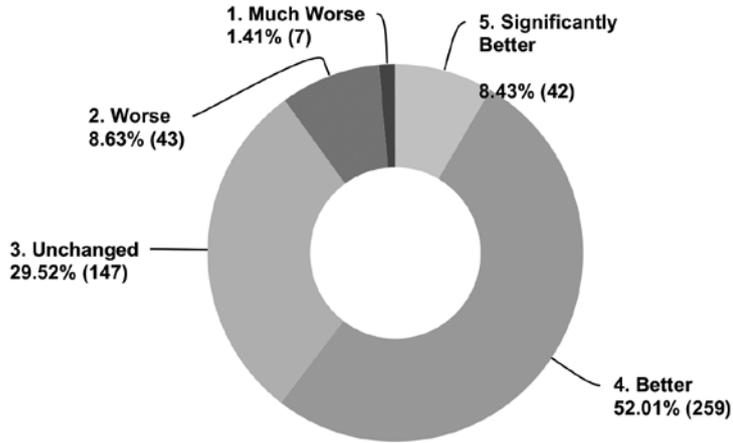
The Greater Cincinnati Urban League commissioned a survey on inclusion early in 2015.

Integrity Development Corp., West Chester, conducted the survey of 503 respondents.

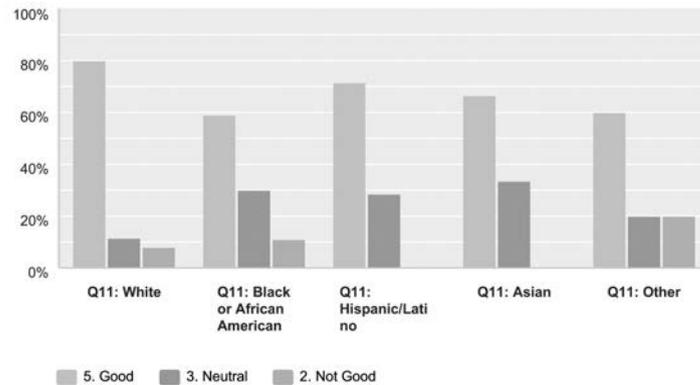
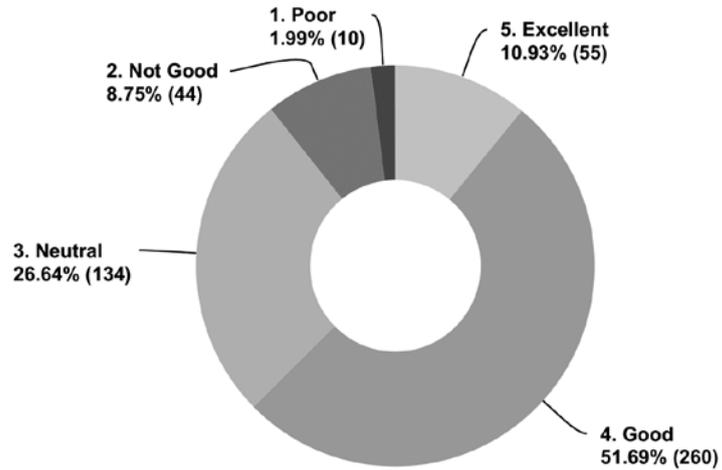
## Q1 Rate Cincinnati as an inclusive and welcoming city.



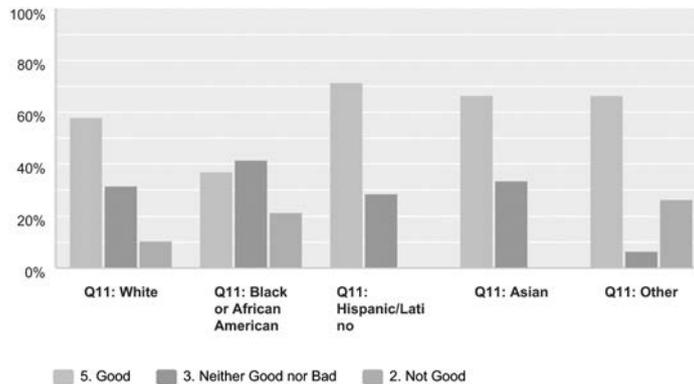
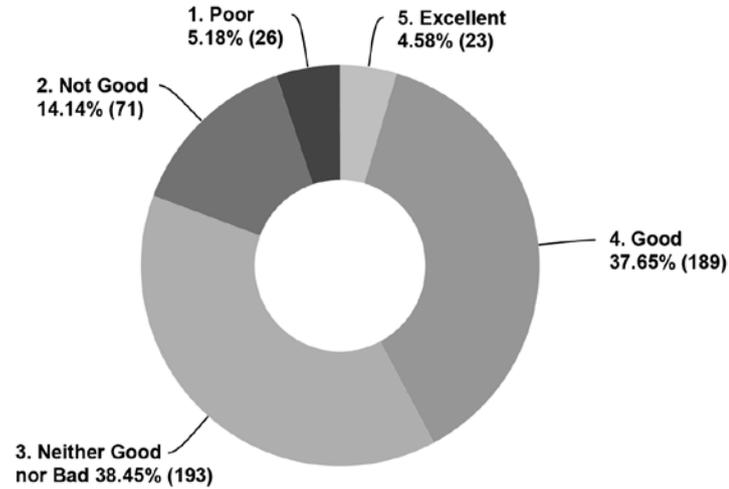
**Q2 Rate the state of race relations in Cincinnati today compared to the 2001 Civil Unrest period.**



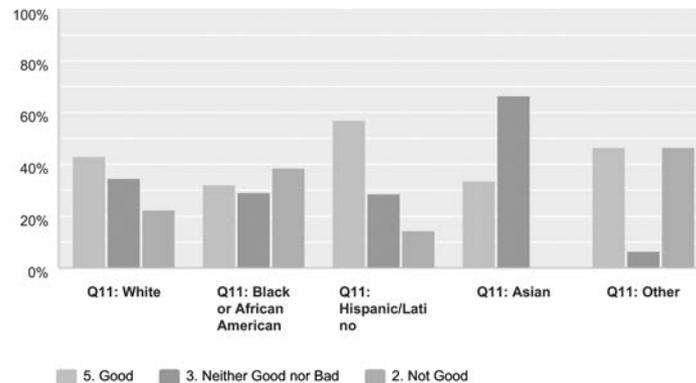
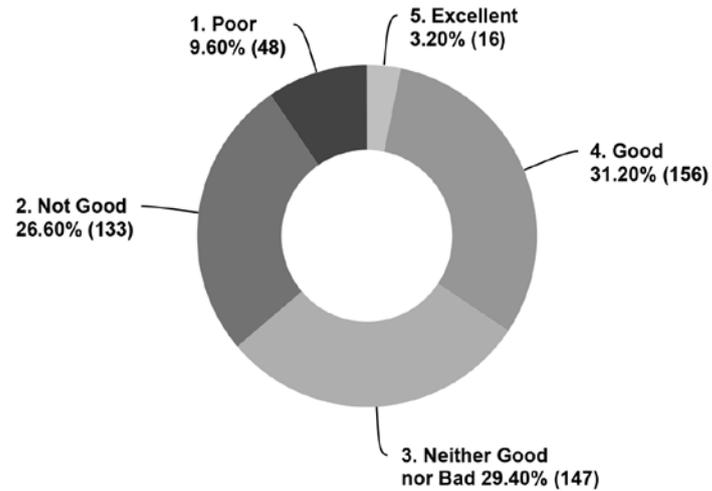
### Q3 Rate the quality of life you are experiencing in Cincinnati today.



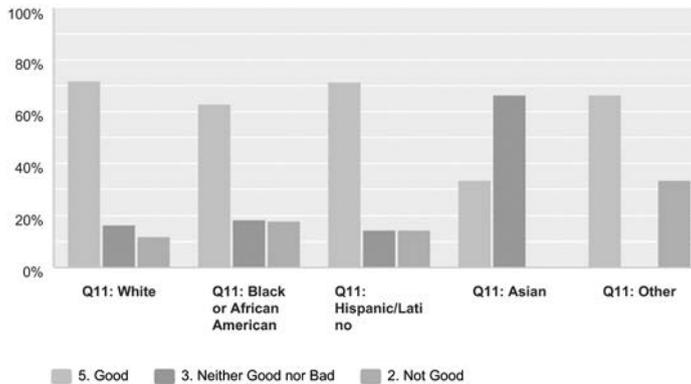
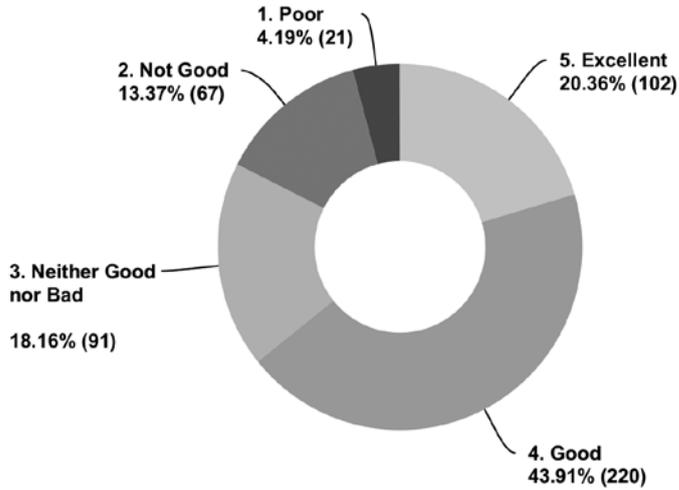
## Q4 How would you rate Police-Community relationships in Cincinnati today?



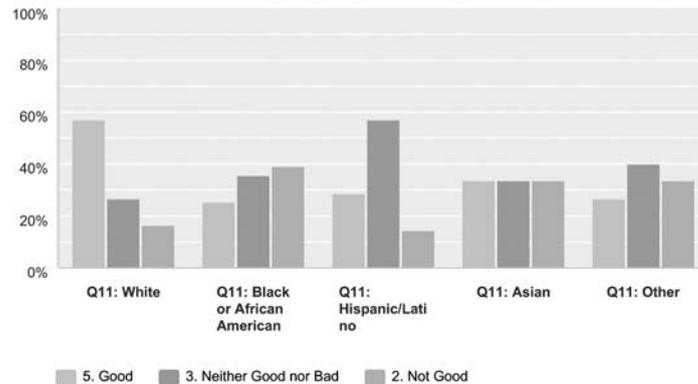
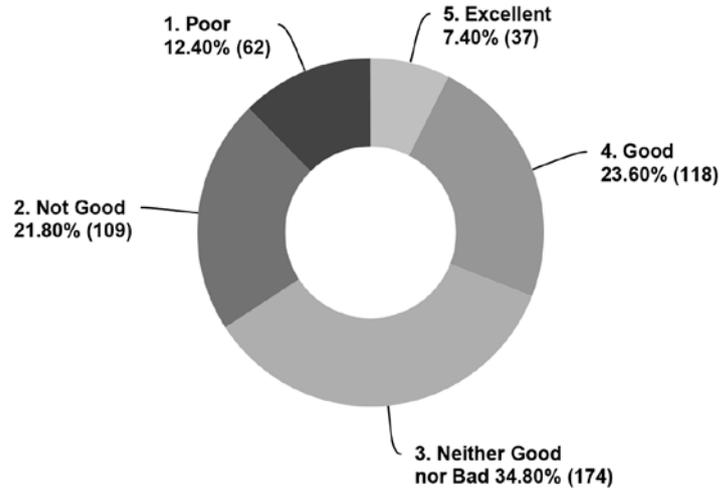
## Q5 How would you rate overall job opportunities currently available Cincinnati?



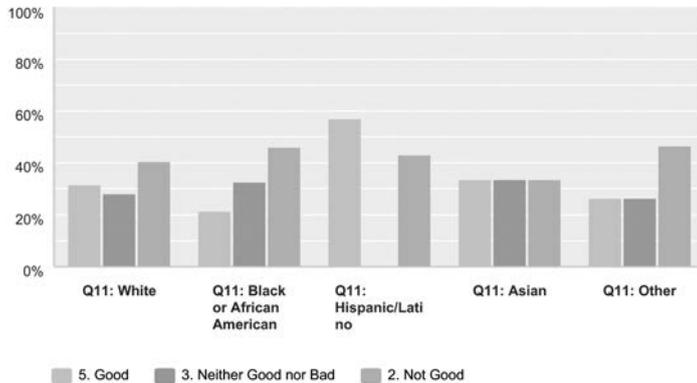
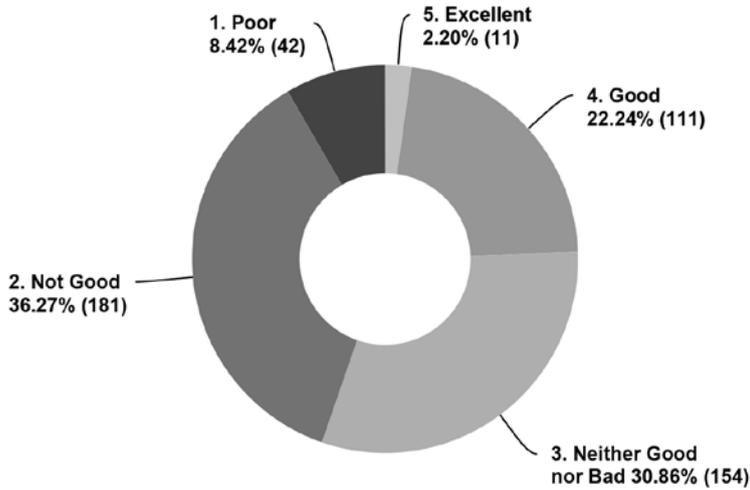
**Q6 Rate your perception of the access you and/or your family members have to a high quality education.**



## Q7 Rate your current access to capital from lending institutions in Cincinnati.



**Q8 Rate your perception of the level of inclusion that exists in Cincinnati neighborhoods.**





*“...dedicated to positively affecting generations of people through economic equality.”*

**ABOUT THE  
URBAN  
LEAGUE  
OF GREATER  
SOUTHWESTERN  
OHIO**

# History and programs

By Mark Curnutte

Founded in 1948 as an independent social service agency, the Greater Cincinnati Urban League is dedicated to positively affecting generations of people through economic equality and self-sufficiency.

Its earliest efforts focused on helping African-Americans who had migrated from the South to northern cities and industrial centers in search of jobs. Through the years, following its incorporation in 1949, the local Urban League affiliate has worked to help African-Americans and others living in poverty in five areas: job training and placement, advocacy, health, youth development, and leadership. Those elements are the basis of everything the League does today as it envisions strong African-American families that are well-educated, healthy, and able to contribute significantly to their communities.

Greater Cincinnati's affiliate, one of 93 across the country, is a proud part of the National Urban League movement. That movement started in the early 20th century, following the U.S. Supreme Court's approval of racial segregation in the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision. African-Americans moved by the tens of thousands from the South to escape its brutal system of economic, social, and political oppression. Separate was not equal.

Yet newcomers to the North realized quickly they were not free from racial discrimination and knew they would need help to gain equal housing, employment beyond menial jobs, and educational rights. Following the merger of several black-advocacy and civil rights groups through the decade of 1910-1919, the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes emerged in 1920 with the shortened name the National Urban League.

The Greater Cincinnati Urban League merged in 2012 with the newly created Miami Valley Urban League and legally became the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, Inc. This regional affiliate's service area covers Greater Cincinnati, Greater Dayton, and Northern Kentucky.

This regional League today works in four major program areas:

### **Youth Development**

**After School League** increases student academic achievement through academic and cultural enrichment opportunities and provides small-group tutoring in math and reading. **Project Ready** is based on the National Urban League's flagship college access program and prepares students in grades 9-12 for success. **The Summer Youth Employment Program** and **Urban Youth Employment Program** train youths on appropriate workplace behavior and attire, and work with public and private employers to create summer and year-around job opportunities.

### **Jobs, Economic Empowerment, Workforce Development**

**Employment Connections** is a seven-

step program that teaches participants how to connect with potential employers. **ACE**, which stands for Accelerated Call Center Education, is an intensive four-week program that helps participants develop customer-service skills necessary to obtain meaningful and stable employment, primarily in the call center industry. **SOAR**, the Urban League's flagship job-readiness programs, otherwise known as Solid Opportunities for Advancement and Retention, was created in 1998. Seventy-five percent of graduates find employment within three months of graduation. **Suit Yourself Gentleman's Clothing Closet** provides male graduates of programs professional business attire and suits for interviewing with prospective employers. Female participants receive interview clothing from Dress for Success, a nonprofit partner organization.

**Construction Connections** is an eight-week pre-apprenticeship training program that prepares participants for careers in the construction industry. It is a collaboration between the Greater Cincinnati Urban League of and Allied Construction Industries, and receives funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation. The Greater Cincinnati Urban League partners

with Cincinnati Public Schools to provide General Education Degree, **GED**, training. **Financial Opportunity Centers** were established to help low-to-moderate income families boost earnings, reduce expenses, and make appropriate financial decisions that lead to asset building.

### **Economic Empowerment**

The **Cincinnati Economic Empowerment Center** helps established entrepreneurs take advantage of new business opportunities and qualify for financing that will lead to higher levels of business growth. The **Small Business Development Center** is a one-stop shop for business and technical assistance, counseling, business plan preparation, strategic planning, financial forecasting and analysis, and market planning. The **African-American Business Development Program** is a comprehensive five-month program designed for African-American business owners who want to build sustainable companies and create employment opportunities for the community. The **Ohio River Valley/Women's Business Enterprise Council** is a collaborative

effort dedicated to building businesses in our community and to economic empowerment of women-owned businesses in our region.

### **Justice**

The **African-American Leadership Development Program**, created in 2003, has served 600 African-American professionals in a 10-month journey that exposes them to critical issues facing the community. The Greater Cincinnati Urban League houses the **Community Police Partnering Center** and supports its efforts to create problem-solving strategies regarding police-community relations. The **Sickle Cell Awareness Group** provides awareness, education, and screening services to those Greater Cincinnati residents and family members affected by this disease.

*For more information, please go to the website [www.gcul.org](http://www.gcul.org), or call (513) 281-9955. The Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio and the Greater Cincinnati Urban League, 3458 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45229.*

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# A call to action

## **Join us: Time to act is now – not later**

This report has laid out facts and strong opinions that, for some readers, may be difficult to read and digest.

For many, however, this collection of statistics paints a bleak, possibly overwhelming snapshot of Cincinnati's African-American community and its economic and social challenges.

Yet we do not have time to feel badly and throw up our hands in despair. We must act, and we must act now with unprecedented cooperation, focus, and intentionality.

Those reasons are why we, the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio and one of our subsidiaries, the Greater Cincinnati Urban League, are taking the lead. Still, we want to make clear we are not reducing or criticizing, in any way, all of the

ongoing efforts to end race-based economic, health, and social disparities.

We have formed a “Guiding Coalition” of organizations and individuals willing to work tirelessly to decrease the overrepresentation of African-Americans in all of society's ills. This mechanism is designed to allow anyone who wants to be part of the solution to have a point of entry. We believe strongly that the findings of this report demand action. We also believe strongly that solutions to the ills identified in the report will require the power and focused energy of the entire community, if we are to turn the tide of disparity into generational prosperity. Solving these problems will require bold thinking and cooperation unseen previously in Cincinnati.

We all have a stake in whether our urban neighborhoods sink further or rise.

We are encouraged by community members who are calling for a sweeping \$50 million investment in reducing the poverty that leads to hopelessness and unchecked violence in our neighborhoods.

National Urban League President Marc Morial, the former mayor of New Orleans, explains that shared stake this way: “In the 21st century, those communities with broad divides are going to be less attractive for business expansion and business relocation.”

Agenda 360, a collection of business and community leaders who created the regional action plan *Diverse by Design*, put it in these words: “It’s clear that our region’s diversity is not comparable to the country as a whole. We believe that regions that reflect the new demographics will be better prepared to grow and prosper. ...Our top companies know that multicultural teams

with diversity of thought and experience are better at developing new markets than homogeneous ones. Recruiters recognize that multicultural employees are more easily retained when they see evidence of opportunity...and when they have social and cultural connections outside of work. A growing body of research suggests that companies with more diversity and inclusion—including the boardroom—post better performance over time.”

Lifting our region’s economically and socially deprived communities lifts us all. Let’s get serious about this effort once and for all. Your Urban League is all in. Please join us.

*To become a part of the Guiding Coalition and for further information on how you can help, please contact the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio at: [partofthesolution@gcul.org](mailto:partofthesolution@gcul.org)*

# Current members of Guiding Coalition

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# Acknowledgments

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Thank you, Jenny, for your many years of service to the Greater Cincinnati Urban League and larger community.

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The Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio and the community at-large are

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I appreciate those community leaders, particularly Karen Bankston, the Rev. Damon Lynch Jr., and former Cincinnati Mayor Dwight Tillery – who helped initiate our call to create a “Guiding Coalition.” The coalition is a group of individuals willing to work tirelessly to decrease the black community’s over-representation in the ills of society. We are creating a mechanism whereby *anyone who wants to help* will be able to easily find their niche and begin their work. The creation of this coalition, the primary recommendation from this report, will develop objectives for positive change in the black community and hold each of us accountable if positive change does not occur.

And, finally, I thank you, the reader, for taking time to reflect on this report and for what I know will be your affirmative response to our request for help build a better Cincinnati for all.

*Donna Jones Baker  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
July 13, 2015*

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