



COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT: Equity & Well-Being



United Way
of East Central Iowa

2016 update



Equity & Well-Being

What Is Equity & Why Is It Important?

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but there is a very important distinction between the two.

Equality is making sure everyone has the same thing without any regard to additional barriers. Equity ensures that everyone has the same access to all opportunities with consideration for barriers. Inequities, whether related to poverty, race and ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, or ability group have multigenerational impacts.

Communities are changing across the United States, including East Central Iowa. Our rural communities are growing older and have decreased access to resources. When you look at population trends from 1990–2014, all five-counties in our service area have become more diverse; Linn County alone had an increase of 192% in the non-Caucasian population.

As we become more diverse as a community, it's important to look below the surface. Our general population statistics tell a healthy story: growth in employment and solid graduation rates are positive. Cedar Rapids often appears on lists of good places to live and raise children, but is that story true for all residents in our service area? Can our community be healthy and resilient if members of different populations and neighborhoods struggle with adversity?

Children of color are the fastest growing segment in our population. They will be our future workforce, and their success will be our success. With that in mind, we examined the assets and obstacles that may affect these children and their families.

How Do We Know This Is a Problem?

There are three keys to well-being: education, financial stability, and health. If equity exists, populations should reflect access to these assets similarly to their percentage of the population. United Way and key partners, including Linn County Public Health and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, conducted an environmental scan to determine the well-being of different populations. They found many instances of significant disparities.

High stress, isolated, and under-resourced neighborhoods have an impact on outcomes for children and families. Neighborhoods with higher numbers of single-parent families, higher percentages of rental apartments, increased crime, lower educational levels, and other variables paint a bleak picture compared to more affluent neighborhoods.

Research from Professor Robert D. Putnam shows this disparity continues to grow. Putnam notes, "Class segregation across America has been growing for decades, so fewer affluent kids live in poor neighborhoods, and fewer poor kids live in rich neighborhoods."² Dr. Robert Sampson from Harvard also states that neighborhood differences have lasting impacts on "crime, poverty, child health, public protest, the density of elite networks, civic engagement, teen births, altruism, perceived disorder, collective efficacy, [and] immigration"³ among other things. We must interrupt this cyclic nature of neighborhood poverty, where poor neighborhoods with few assets lead to fewer opportunities for its residents, for citizens to thrive.



EQUITY ensures everyone
has the **SAME ACCESS**
to all opportunities with
CONSIDERATION FOR BARRIERS.

Neighborhood Comparisons

Note: Neighborhood data below is from a census tract that most closely aligns with City designated neighborhood



	Neighborhood	Westdale		Taylor		Oakhill Jackson		Wellington Heights		Cedar Rapids		Linn County	
	Zip Code	52404		52404		52403		52403					
	Census Label	10.03		22		27		17					
Age	Total Population	6,841		1,999		1,664		5,995		128,009		214,927	
	Median Age	32.6		32.2		42.9		35.6		35.6		36.9	
	Under Age 5	646	9%	210	11%	146	9%	519	9%	8,880	7%	13,973	7%
	Between Ages 5-17	805	12%	314	16%	183	11%	1,189	20%	20,508	16%	37,841	18%
	Over Age 65	1,017	15%	140	7%	275	17%	620	10%	17,068	13%	29,168	13%
Race/ Ethnicity	White Alone	5,067	74%	1,362	68%	1,124	68%	4,164	70%	109,137	85%	190,417	89%
	Black	1,027	15%	314	16%	367	22%	812	14%	7,799	6%	9,020	4%
	Hispanic or Latino	506	7%	161	8%	5	0%	224	4%	4,541	4%	6,029	3%
	Total Not White	1,774	26%	637	32%	540	32%	1,831	31%	18,872	15%	24,510	11%
Househol d	Married Households	769	53%	220	51%	163	58%	836	63%	23,278	74%	42,623	77%
	Single Mother Households	613	43%	167	38%	78	28%	419	32%	5,821	19%	8,601	16%
Financial Stability	Total Families Below 250% FPL*	764	53%	291	67%	165	58%	587	44%	9,907	32%	15,321	28%
	Median Household Income	\$30,908		\$31,188		\$18,707		\$48,567		\$54,465		\$59,560	
	White Alone	\$36,705		\$36,630		\$19,271		\$49,416		\$56,258		\$61,093	
	Black	\$17,846		\$8,194		\$16,098		\$36,779		\$27,550		\$27,910	
	Hispanic or Latino	\$17,041		\$13,125		Not Available		Not Available		\$39,196		\$37,268	
Education	Elementary School	Hoover	Van Buren	Taylor	Harrison	Grant Wood		Johnson	Grant Wood	N/A		N/A	
	Total FRL	79%	76%	92%	74%	67%		82%	67%	50%		34%	
	Fall 15' Kindergarten Readiness	57%	68%	41%	58%	60%		62%	60%	62%		68%	
	4th Grade Reading Proficiently	51%	58%	46%	66%	76%		49%	76%	87%		77%	

* Values estimated based on an average family household size of 3

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, (August 2016).

Cedar Rapids Community School District

NEIGHBORHOOD DISPARITIES

In some neighborhoods, there are greater disparities in health, education, and financial stability. These neighborhoods have become more diverse since the 1990s, and are located near central Cedar Rapids. Urban or metro communities of color often face multiple barriers such as having limited education, no health insurance, and living in low-income households and neighborhoods, more so than their Caucasian counterparts in the general population.¹

The neighborhood comparisons are based on 2014 American Community Survey estimates from the Census that further highlights disparities in households across the highest need neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids. The table above includes both the number of individuals or households living in that neighborhood for each indicator, as well as the percent of the population in that neighborhood. For example, this shows that there are nearly three times more people in Westdale (764) living under the 250% FPL than in the Taylor (291) neighborhood. However, when you look at the percent of the population living under 250% FPL we see that a higher percent of people living Taylor live below 250% FPL (67%) than in Westdale (53%).

DISPARITY IN FINANCIAL STABILITY

Families may remain in high stress and low resource neighborhoods (or keep poverty) for generations if they do not have proper resources to overcome challenges. For a family of three, a household needs to make \$50,255 to meet basic needs. However, many in our community do not have stable wages, particularly families of color.

Median African American household income is nearly half of what is needed to support a family, while Hispanics only make two-thirds. In addition, 52% of those receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits are African American and 38% are Hispanic, yet African Americans and Hispanics only make up 7% of Linn County's population.

Housing is another reason why families may be unstable. In Linn County, renters are more likely to struggle to afford their housing or live in high stress low resource neighborhoods. 38% of renters spend more than one-third of their household income on housing, compared to 20% of homeowners who struggle to pay their mortgage.

While our communities across Iowa and the country are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, there are still stark wealth and income inequalities. According to a recent study, The Racial Wealth Gap, the typical African American household now has just 6%, and Latino 8%, of the wealth of

a typical Caucasian household. The median household income in 2011 of \$111,000 for Caucasians translates to \$7,000 for an African American family and \$8,000 for a Latino household. The wealth gap impacts the ability to own a home and pass wealth onto the next generation.

DISPARITIES IN HEALTH AND ACCESS TO CARE

In addition to barriers to basic needs, families of color also struggle to access affordable and quality healthcare. In Iowa, Medicaid reimbursed a disproportionate number of births to African American, American Indian, and Hispanic women in 2012, compared to Caucasian and Asian women.

Linn County has the second highest rate of uninsured individuals in Iowa at 6%. Health insurance is essential to receiving preventative care and ensuring positive health outcomes. Compared to the general population, lack of insurance disproportionately impacts the Hispanic population (11%) and African Americans (9%). Hispanic men ages 18–34 (16%) had the highest rate of being uninsured in 2015, followed by African American men at 15% and Hispanic women at 13%.³

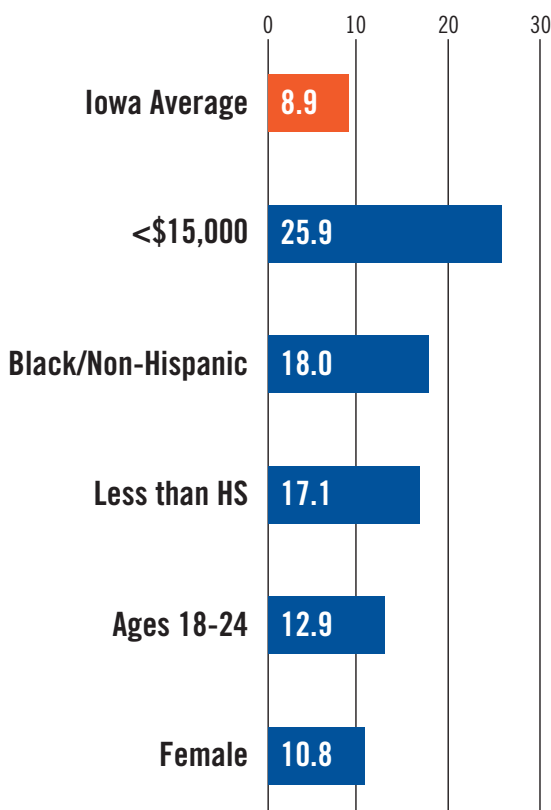
There is also an increase in mental distress in communities of color. According to the Centers for Disease Control Quality of Life Survey⁴, the populations at highest risk for frequent mental distress are households with income less than \$15,000, African American/Non-Hispanic, less educated, people ages 18–24, and women in comparison to the overall Iowa rate of 8.9%.⁵

EDUCATION AND ACHIEVEMENT DISPARITIES

Fourth grade reading proficiency is a critical benchmark for all children. It marks the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Children who are not proficient at this point will continue to struggle. In 2015, there was a significant gap between white and African-American students reading proficiency in the Cedar Rapids School District. Of those assessed, nearly 79% of white students were proficient in reading, while only 45.57% of their African-American peers were proficient.

African American and low-income children (eligible for free and reduced price lunches) struggle to achieve the same level as their Caucasian, financially stable peers. These students often enter school behind and are less likely to graduate. This continues the cycle of poverty within African American and disadvantaged communities. In *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, Professor Putnam states as the 21st century began, a family's socioeconomic status (SES) had become even more important than test scores in predicting which eighth graders would graduate from college. A family's socioeconomic status also contributed to great disparities in engagement in enrichment activities, which also contribute to more positive outcomes for young people.

Percentage Reporting 14-30 Days of Poor Mental Health



HOUSING INDICATORS BY RACE/ ETHNICITY

Race/ Ethnicity	Linn Cty 2009	Linn Cty 2014	Change (2009-14)	Iowa 2014
White Householder	79,702	79,981	279	1,127,913
Renter	25.1%	23.5%	-1.6%	25.6%
Owner	74.9%	76.5%	1.6%	74.4%
African American Householder	2,257	3,113	856	31,265
Renter	71.1%	75.2%	4.1%	70.1%
Owner	28.9%	24.8%	-4.1%	29.9%
Asian Householder	1,299	1,337	38	18,478
Renter	56.0%	52.8%	-3.2%	50.8%
Owner	44.0%	47.2%	3.2%	49.2%
Hispanic or Latino Householder	1,356	1,425	69	41,401
Renter	53.4%	43.6%	-9.8%	48.1%
Owner	46.6%	56.4%	9.8%	51.9%

INCOME INDICATORS BY RACE/ ETHNICITY

	Race/ Ethnicity	Linn Cty 2009	Linn Cty 2014	Change (2009-14)	Iowa 2014
Median Household Income	White	\$53,350	\$61,093	14.5%	\$53,780
	African American	\$21,700	\$27,910	28.6%	\$27,745
	Asian	\$61,504	\$71,701	16.6%	\$59,028
	Hispanic or Latino	\$47,316	\$37,268	-21.2%	\$40,551
Percent Below Poverty	White	8.5%	7.7%	-0.8%	10.6%
	African American	39.5%	37.3%	-2.2%	37.2%
	Asian	10.1%	4.0%	-6.1%	17.8%
	Hispanic or Latino	20.4%	22.0%	1.6%	25.5%
Percent Receiving Food Stamps	White	7.8%	9.7%	1.9%	10.0%
	African American	44.8%	51.8%	7.0%	41.7%
	Asian	9.7%	9.1%	-1.6%	11.6%
	Hispanic or Latino	21.0%	37.8%	16.8%	24.8%
Percent in Labor Force	White	71.6%	70.5%	-1.1%	67.8%
	African American	69.5%	68.1%	-1.4%	64.6%
	Asian	68.5%	71.9%	3.4%	67.4%
	Hispanic or Latino	78.0%	76.2%	-1.8%	74.4%

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (AGE 25+) INDICATORS BY RACE/ ETHNICITY

	Race/ Ethnicity	Linn Cty 2009	Linn Cty 2014	Change (2009-14)	Iowa 2014
Percent HS Graduate or more	White	93.3%	95.0%	1.7%	93.1%
	African American	81.7%	83.1%	1.4%	82.2%
	Asian	92.0%	92.9%	0.9%	82.9%
	Hispanic or Latino	85.8%	72.5%	-13.3%	56.9%
Percent Bachelors Degree or more	White	29.1%	31.8%	2.7%	26.8%
	African American	15.9%	17.6%	1.7%	17.3%
	Asian	56.4%	59.9%	3.5%	49.9%
	Hispanic or Latino	22.4%	21.2%	-1.2%	11.5%

SYSTEM INVOLVEMENT

We find disproportionality when looking at who is involved with child welfare and corrections systems. These systems often engage with children and families who experience financial instability, limited education and employment opportunities, and high stress neighborhood environments.

In Linn County, this is particularly true for people of color and, more specifically, the African American community. Only one of every 24 residents is African American; yet, a point in time snapshot revealed that one of every three Linn County Jail inmates was African American.

In his book *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, Professor Robert D. Putnam states that in 1990, more than half of all African American children born to less educated parents experienced parental imprisonment. In this same time period, single-parent families became more and more common in the less educated, lower-income section of the population.

The same is true when looking at children who become involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice system. Although African American children make up only 7.4% of youth under the age of 18 in Linn County, they are overrepresented in accepted referrals and founded abuse at twice the rate of Caucasian children. African American children entered foster care at three and a half times the rate of Caucasian children. Statewide, there are efforts to better address underlying issues of disproportionality and disparity at the various points of entry into the child welfare system.

These experiences have a negative impact on families' stability and well-being, as well as contribute to multigenerational cycles of poverty. It can increase trauma for children who are already vulnerable to higher rates of adversity, which can impact lifelong learning, functioning, and health.

Eradicating poverty and its negative effect on children and families and applying equity informed perspective to solutions requires cross sector, collaborative work that focuses on the entire family. If parents aren't doing well, then their children will also struggle.



What Are We Doing about It?



The Safe, Equitable, Thriving Taskforce (SET) is a cross-sector collaborative team working towards data driven and impactful solutions to address issues of equity and adversity in communities of color. SET assesses educational pathways, housing, and youth engagement to address disparities for children of color in Cedar Rapids.



1Strong addresses issues of safety and resources with youth and neighbors impacted by violence and disparity in outcomes for young adults impacted by poverty, racism, and lack of opportunity.



We need to foster **multigenerational, place-based strategies** that build high capacity communities and families. The result will be strong parents and ready kids. We will implement prevention efforts that disrupt the cycle of poverty and adversity, and develop opportunities for both parents and children.



Equality
vs.
Equity



Sources

¹ <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports2/2016/04/21-race-place-multidimensional-poverty>

² R. Putnam. *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster Press, 2015) 217.

³ <http://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/2015-plan-selections-county-health-insurance-marketplace>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Health-Related Quality of Life Survey

⁵ <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/HRQOL/>



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