

Health Equity Now: Toward an All-In Sacramento

PolicyLink



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Foreword

The Sacramento region works when all have a stake in the economy and all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. We are stronger as a region when everyone works, has a home, and has access to quality health care and education, and when we all are treated fairly, with dignity and respect for our individual contributions.

Unfortunately, this is not our reality, as this report shows in great detail. Opportunity is out of reach for far too many people.

Our collaborative, the Healthy Sacramento Coalition, is committed to taking bold action and to setting in place new policies, systems, and structures that advance equity: just and fair inclusion. We are a coalition of 42 organizations working across the areas that affect the health, wealth, and well-being of Sacramentans across our region, focusing on the “social determinants of health.” We chose this focus because these areas play key roles in determining our ability to be healthy and realize our full potential in our economy and in our communities.

We developed this report and accompanying data profile in partnership with PolicyLink and the University of Southern California Program for Environmental and Regional Equity to examine the state of equity in Sacramento. It is abundantly clear that our current structures and policies are broken.

The good news is that we can fix them with a little Sacramento ingenuity. Even better, the policies we recommend will stabilize a boom-and-bust economy and have the potential to expand the gross domestic product of the region by more than \$19 billion. When we restore our opportunity pathways, all will be able to contribute and participate in our economy. This will lift up everyone in the region.

This report defines and launches our change agenda. We demand change to our current short-sighted policies that benefit far too few. We offer, instead, a vision of inclusion and prosperity that will benefit everyone: an “all-in” Sacramento.

Sincerely,
The Healthy Sacramento Coalition

Introduction

Sacramento is a place of extraordinary potential. As the seat of government for the state of California—a major engine of economic growth, diversity, and policy innovation in the United States—Sacramento is often in the national spotlight. World-class sports teams, historic sites, a scenic river, and more, attract tourists. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the state¹ and has been named one of the most diverse cities in the nation.²

Despite these tremendous assets, the region is not capitalizing on its biggest asset—its people. Since its founding, racially discriminatory policies and practices have shaped the region and constrained the opportunities available to residents who are people of color and immigrants. This is most evident in the region's long-standing patterns of segregated housing, but can be seen across multiple areas from jobs and income to transportation to voting and more.

Sacramento must change course. To put the region on the path of racial inclusion and prosperity for all, Sacramento's leaders need to embrace and lead with equity: just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity seeks to counteract the barriers and systemic exclusions (historic and current) that prevent people from every racial and ethnic group from realizing their potential.

Achieving equity in Sacramento requires an understanding of these barriers and working to proactively ensure each individual's circumstances—in their neighborhoods and streets, at school and work, and in their local economy—provide them with the optimal opportunity to thrive. Doing so would not only rectify historic injustices, but also would yield economic dividends for all residents. Our analysis finds that the Sacramento economy could be \$19.4 billion larger with racial equity in incomes.³

The Healthy Sacramento Coalition has a further focus on health equity: when everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be healthy, as defined by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This requires removing obstacles to health, such as poverty and discrimination and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to high-quality education, employment, income, family and social support, community safety, air and water quality, and housing and transit. These are the social determinants of health—the factors outside of the health-care system that play a fundamental role in shaping community environments and influencing health outcomes. Health equity is well-aligned with inclusive growth because healthy people are better able to contribute to a vibrant regional economy.

This policy brief and the accompanying data profile, *Advancing Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in the Sacramento Region*,⁴ examine the current state of demographic change and equity, and present a policy agenda to shift the region toward health and shared prosperity. It was produced by PolicyLink and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at the University of Southern California, in partnership with the committed group of advocacy organizations comprising the Healthy Sacramento Coalition. The report describes the challenge and opportunity in three parts:

- **How Did We Get Here? Sacramento's History of Inequity** describes the inequitable policies that have structured opportunity (and lack of opportunity) across the region's neighborhoods and racial/ethnic groups.
- **The State of Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in the Sacramento Region** describes the living conditions and health outcomes of people of color in the four-county metropolitan area.
- **A Policy Agenda for Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in Sacramento** provides recommendations that focus on Sacramento County to support the Healthy Sacramento Coalition as its members prioritize their agenda.

This analysis is based on interviews with several local stakeholders, focus groups, and a data profile analysis of the four-county metropolitan area. While this policy brief does not exhaustively address the assets and challenges facing Sacramento County, we hope that it can serve as a framework for the Healthy Sacramento Coalition to advance as part of its long-term efforts toward equity.

How Did We Get Here?

Sacramento's History of Inequity

In many ways, land use policy in Sacramento provides a tangible illustration of how structural racism is perpetuated, and how deeply racial discrimination has been woven into the fabric of the region. In fact, for many years Sacramento showed great promise as a place where regional collaboration and participatory planning were preparing the city for growth in an effective manner.⁵ However, advocates in Sacramento have not yet been able to overcome the racial exclusion and bias that have shaped public policy and private practices in the region. It is crucial to recognize the link between segregated communities, lending practices, and land use and to understand how these systems continue to affect the quality of life of the region's population.

Sacramento's stalled progress is likely due to a confluence of factors, including the loss over time of public-sector jobs, which had fueled the region's stable employment, particularly after the closure of three military bases. Low-wage service jobs replaced these middle- and high-wage public-sector job opportunities. At the same time, housing development was increasingly characterized by suburban sprawl, creating an imbalance between jobs and housing. This imbalance was exacerbated by a lack of adequate public transportation that led to a dependence on automobiles. Additional economic pressures have resulted from the migration of home seekers from the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, who are in search of relief from soaring housing costs in their communities. The region's housing planning process also lacked a key element—attention to equity. Specifically, “equity advocates note three broad areas for improvement: better incorporation of disadvantaged communities in planning; the creation of more equity-focused planning goals; and the need to develop specific equity metrics to track performance.”⁶

Dr. Jesus Hernandez, a local university professor who previously worked in the real estate industry in Sacramento, undertook an in-depth analysis of the way that racial discrimination was historically institutionalized through the use of racially restrictive real estate covenants, deed restrictions, redlining, and other tactics that blocked non-Whites from living in specific areas, dating all the way back to the actions of home builders and developers in Sacramento in the early 1900s. Similar racial restrictions shaped lending practices, including the policies of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), and were incorporated into the design of Sacramento's subdivisions and

CORE: A Framework for Equity

In 2007, advocates in the Sacramento region established the Coalition on Regional Equity (CORE) as an entity to influence public policy and regional planning in ways that would achieve improvements in the health and built environment of lower-income communities and communities of color. CORE included representatives from labor, transportation, academia, faith-based communities, health, environmental and social justice organizations, and civil rights groups. With support from The California Endowment, the Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA) served as CORE's nonprofit organizational sponsor and convened the group regularly to raise awareness of how the built environment impacts community health, to influence land use decisions, and to build the capacity of neighborhood leadership. A steering committee was created to guide the work of the 70 organizations that eventually became involved with CORE in varying degrees. In addition to successfully building the capacity of member organizations and fundraising, SHA and CORE groups were also able to help pass the nation's first Extremely Low Income Housing Ordinance in Sacramento. Unfortunately, CORE's lack of clear governance and membership structure suffered during a leadership transition at SHA, and the group effectively ceased operating in 2012. The Healthy Sacramento Coalition can potentially glean plenty of lessons from CORE regarding effective approaches for collaboration and partnerships to advance equity, including the following:

- Ensure diversity in the staff and leadership of any organization committed to advancing equity.
- Keep the range of organizations engaged to a manageable number, but include representatives from key fields such as labor, immigration, and education.
- Consider the ways that rural and urban areas can work together.

Community Perspectives: Self-Determination and Youth Development

As a Sacramento resident since 1952, Ms. Henderson* has witnessed some of the best and worst of neighborhood change in her Del Paso Heights community. She has raised five children in the neighborhood, but also served as a mother figure to countless other youth during her time with the Del Paso Heights Teen Club and Robertson Community Center. Ms. Henderson has worked tirelessly on behalf of Sacramento youth for more than 30 years, and shared her wisdom about the challenges and successes facing the community in a focus group with 12 other Del Paso Heights residents in February 2017. The rich discussion highlighted some recurring themes, such as:

- Additional resources are needed to support constructive youth programming.
- The public transit system is insufficient for residents to access employment opportunities that pay family-sustaining wages.
- The prevalence of trauma among residents manifests itself in the ways that they interact with each other and how they are perceived by the broader community.

Ms. Henderson spoke passionately about what she called “the forgotten generation”—disconnected men between the ages of 30 and 55 who are too young to benefit from resources dedicated to seniors, yet too old to access programs for youth and young adults. Many of these individuals are products of a school system they feel didn’t prepare them with the marketable skills to succeed in a 21st century economy. As a result, these residents far too often become ensnared in a vicious cycle of unemployment, substance abuse, and the criminal justice system.

A second focus group was held in collaboration with Sacramento Area Congregations Together (ACT).

Participants were from across the city, but largely reflected Sacramento’s Latino and immigrant communities. The themes raised during this discussion included the following.

- English language learners face difficulties in accessing health care and city resources.
- Overall, improved communication is needed to reach these residents.

While the issues raised during these two focus groups are troubling, the resilience of residents also highlights some of the assets embedded in the community. For example, self-determined Del Paso Heights neighbors saw a void in recreational youth programming and created their own athletic league and leadership program. Similarly, community advocates like John Williams* extoll the merits of economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, and he has used his own professional network to help residents develop their own paths to self-sufficiency. Sacramento is replete with these stories of challenges and assets that any concerted effort toward equity must tap into and explore. For example, as policymakers continue to think of ways to manage regional growth and prevent displacement, a better understanding of the lived experience of residents should inform equitable development efforts. Similarly, workforce development advocates and stakeholders may want to consider how to incorporate a trauma-informed lens to guide their work.

*Names changed to protect anonymity.

influenced patterns of public investment. According to Dr. Hernandez, “racially identified spaces were created—political fragmentation and economic stratification along racial lines [have been used] to isolate, disempower, and oppress.”⁷

Housing and lending discrimination confined non-Whites into areas such as the segregated West End neighborhood where dilapidated housing exposed residents to health and safety risks, such as fire and tuberculosis,⁸ which are common in distressed areas. This same neighborhood would later be targeted for redevelopment, displacing thousands of people of color. The forced relocation disrupted the networks that provided residents with social support, destroyed many small businesses, and eliminated countless jobs—yet another manifestation of how discriminatory policies impact communities. Many people of color ended up in Sacramento’s Oak Park neighborhood, where the cycle of segregation and redlining was repeated. By 2005, Oak Park was extremely hard-hit by the mortgage foreclosure crisis.

The legacy of Sacramento’s history of racialized land use and lending policy over the course of the last 100 years has contributed to the isolation of people of color in segregated communities that lack essential elements, including healthy food options, adequate transit, and quality schools, and that are inundated with environmental hazards. A cascade of devastating consequences has followed—including wealth-stripping that has limited the ability of people of color to finance education, small businesses, health-care expenses, and retirement. As Dr. Hernandez notes, racial segregation “continues to impact the manner in which we distribute social goods and organize economic and political action in the American metropolis.”⁹

The consequences of segregation are far-reaching, as public and private policies are frequently influenced by geography. This has been the case in Sacramento, where a pattern of resource allocation that favors affluent communities and denies investment to low-income areas populated predominantly by people of color continues to be the norm. Further, the consequences can be directly connected to health outcomes, as those living in disadvantaged communities tend to have poorer health and higher rates of chronic disease than those living in more affluent areas.¹⁰ Targeted strategies that can eliminate these inequitable health outcomes are urgently needed.

The State of Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in the Sacramento Region

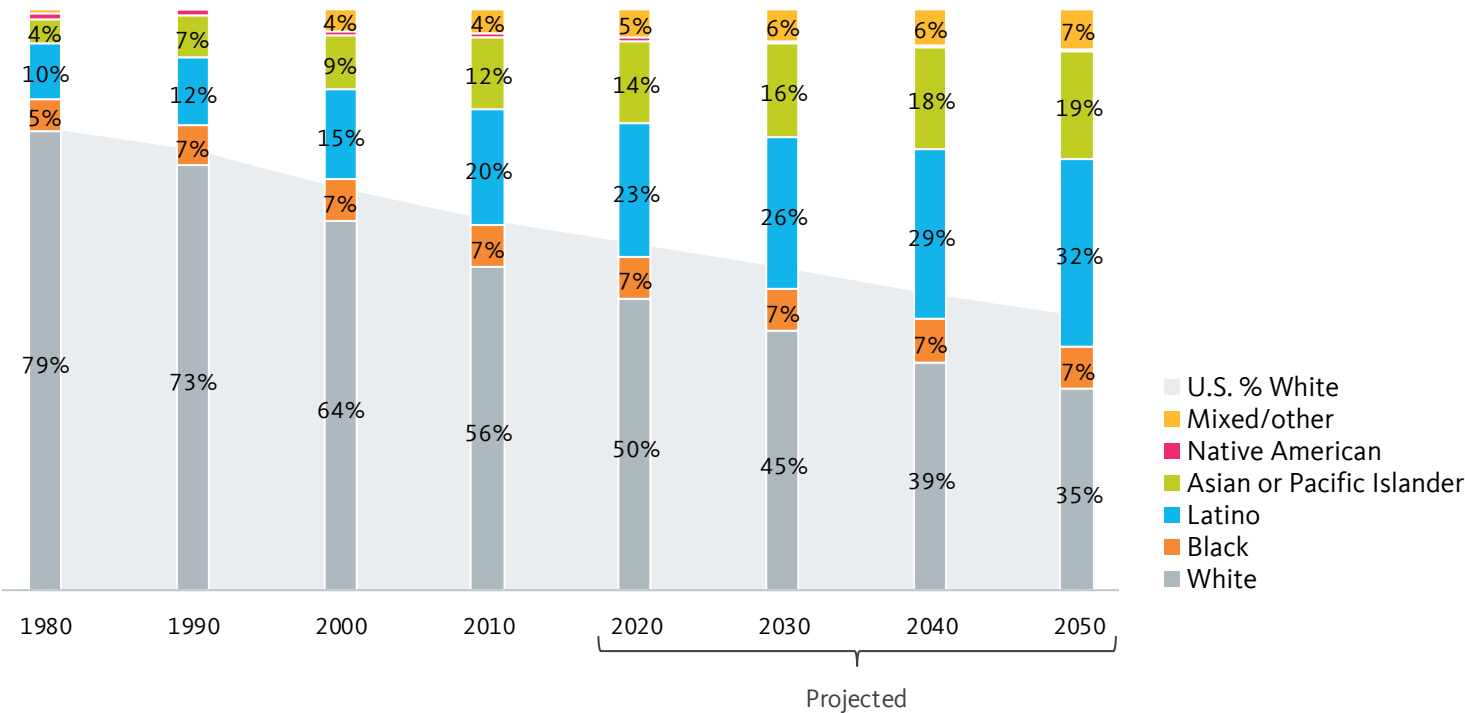
Low-income people and communities of color in Sacramento are contending with the same issues that challenge most regions in California, and cities across the country: homelessness, gentrification and displacement,¹¹ lack of jobs, limited access to health care, and crumbling infrastructure. These challenges have significant implications for both the individual lives of residents and the well-being of the entire region. Addressing these myriad issues is critically important if Sacramento is going to continue to grow and thrive. The following pages outline the current state of health equity in Sacramento based on several areas including demographic shifts, economic vitality, readiness to succeed in a 21st century economy, and connectedness to opportunity.

Demographics: Communities of color are growing in both number and share of the population

As the chart below illustrates, the population of Sacramento has historically been diverse, and that continues to be the case.¹² Whites still make up a majority of the population; however, their numbers have declined from 79 percent in 1980 to 55 percent in 2014.¹³ During the same time period, the share of the population that is Latino more than doubled from 10 percent to 21 percent, and the share that is Asian or Pacific Islander more than tripled from 4 percent to 13 percent. Similarly, the Sacramento region's immigrant population has grown significantly. Since 2000, the Asian or Pacific Islander immigrant population has grown by more than 61,000, while the Black immigrant population, albeit relatively small, has more than doubled.¹⁴ The region's growth is now driven by people of color and immigrants. Yet these residents continue to encounter discrimination in all aspects of their lives.

The Latino population has doubled and is projected to continue growing through 2050.

Racial/Ethnic Composition, 1980 to 2050



Source: PolicyLink/PERE analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau and Woods and Poole Economics, Inc.

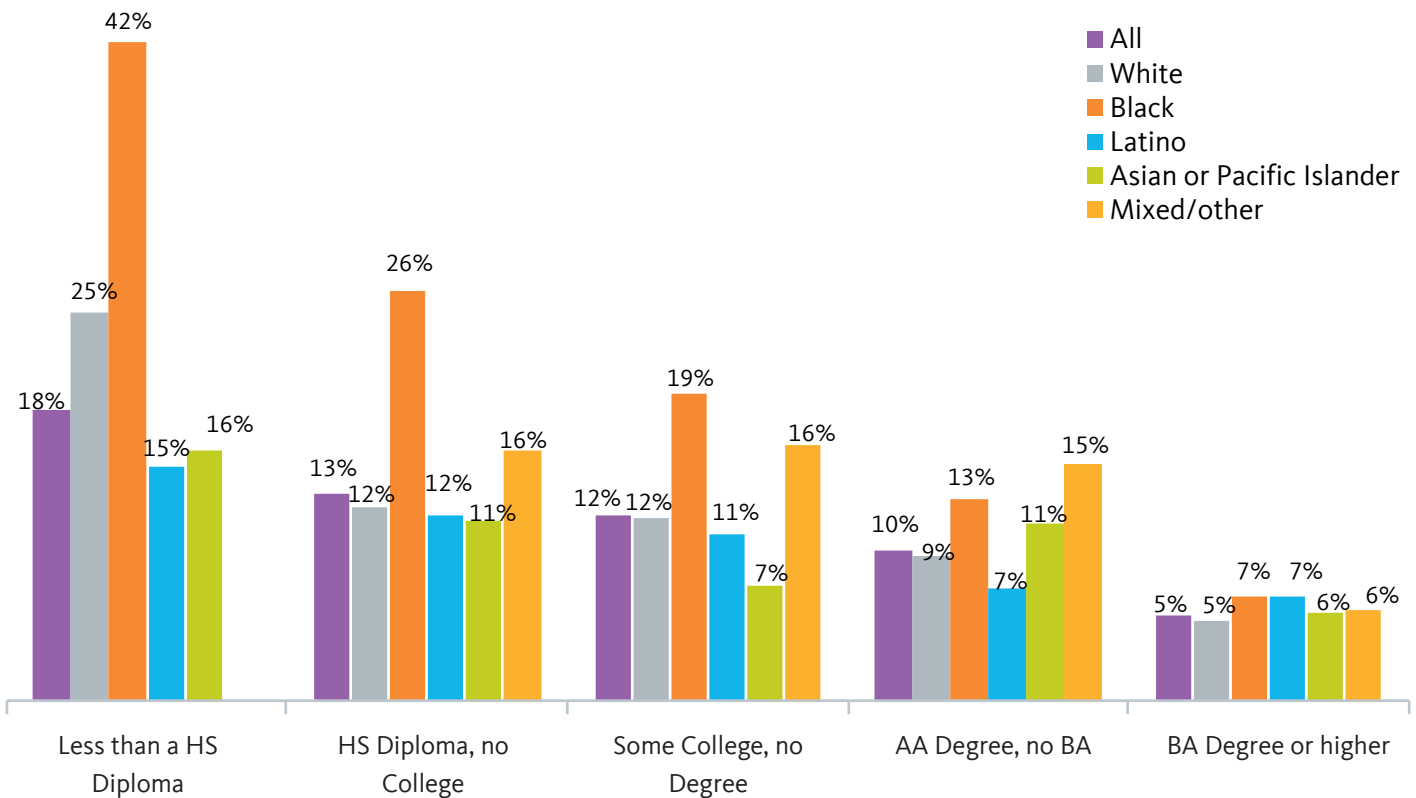
Economic vitality: Sacramento's economy is slowly growing, but racial economic inequities persist

The Sacramento regional economy has experienced modest growth since the Great Recession. Prior to the economic downturn, the region's growth in terms of both jobs and GDP outperformed the nation as a whole. However, that pace has slowed since 2009 and growth in jobs and GDP is roughly the same as the national average.¹⁵ The slowed economic resilience of the region disproportionately impacts people of color. For example, the share of the population living in poverty is considerably higher for Black and Latino residents than the overall average. For both of these groups, the share

of residents living in poverty is more than double that for White residents.¹⁶ There are also disparities for the share of residents considered the working poor. The working-poor rate is defined as the percentage of individuals ages 25 to 64 working full time with family incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Since 2000, the working-poverty rate has increased for Black and Latino workers, but remained stable among White workers. Latino workers are more than three times as likely as White workers to be among the working poor.¹⁷ As illustrated below, disparities also persist in unemployment, with Black workers more likely than White workers to be unemployed at every educational attainment level.¹⁸

Unemployment declines as education levels increase, but racial gaps remain.

Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, 2014



Source: PolicyLink/PERE analysis from the Center for Education and the Workforce; Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.

Note: Universe includes the civilian noninstitutional labor force ages 25 through 64. Data represent a 2010 through 2014 average. Data for some racial/ethnic groups are excluded due to small sample size.

Readiness: Racial gaps in education remain, hindering Sacramento’s workforce

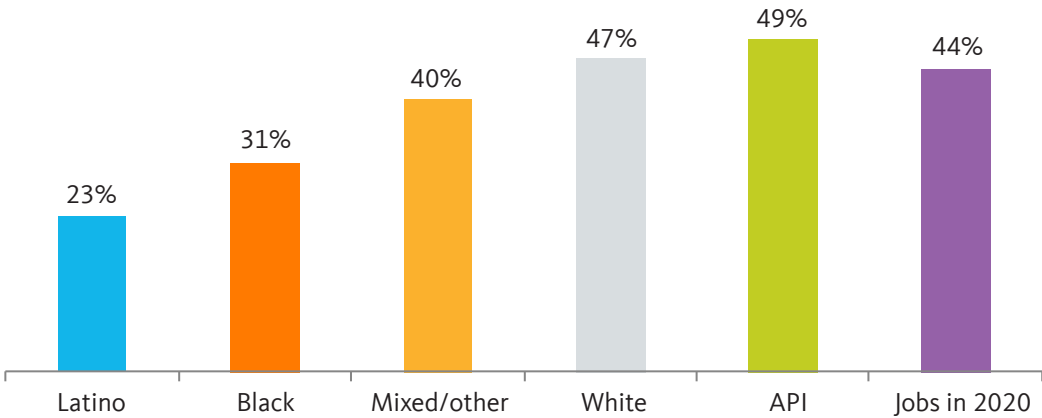
Current prospects for young people are bleak, as only limited opportunities now exist for youth. As of 2014, more than one in four young people (ages 16–24 years) in the Sacramento region—41,800—were neither working nor attending school. These disconnected youth are disproportionately made up of people of color: 30 percent were Latino and another 29 percent were from other groups of color.¹⁹ This fact aligns with the sentiments shared by residents during a focus group in Sacramento’s Del Paso Heights neighborhood in February 2017. Participants expressed concern about the facilities and quality of education being provided at their local high school. For example, several participants questioned the way that sports and athletics were prioritized in relation to academics. Similarly, participants lamented the dearth of resources available to address the emotional and mental health

challenges facing many local youth. Without appropriate supports or a school system that feels responsive to their needs, some youth may feel discouraged from continuing their formal education.

The number of disconnected youth in the region is particularly alarming when considering the education required to take advantage of jobs in the 21st century economy. By 2020, 44 percent of jobs in California will require at least an associate’s degree. However, as illustrated below, currently only 23 percent of Latino residents and 31 percent of Black residents have this level of education.²⁰ It should be noted that even if we were to close the education gap, disparities in income still remain. For example, White workers without a high school diploma earn more than workers of color with a diploma. Gaps are lesser but still persistent across educational levels: the median hourly wage for White workers with a bachelor’s degree is \$7 higher than that for Black workers with the same level of education.²¹

The educational levels of the region’s populations are not keeping up with the demands of employers.

Share of Working-Age Population with an Associate’s Degree or Higher by Race/Ethnicity, 2014, and Projected Share of Jobs that Require an Associate’s Degree or Higher, 2020.



Source: PolicyLink/PERE analysis from the Center for Education and the Workforce; Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.
Note: Universe for education levels of workers includes all persons ages 25 through 64. Data for 2014 by race and ethnicity represent a 2010 through 2014 average; data on jobs in 2020 represent a state-level projection for California. “API” represents Asians or Pacific Islanders.

Connectedness: Lack of affordable housing disproportionately impacts people of color and low-income residents

Housing is a prime example of the ways that inequity is negatively impacting the region, specifically with respect to availability and cost. Few units are available, and the cost of units that do exist pose a hardship for many. With respect to rents, people of color are disproportionately likely to be rent burdened, with 64 percent of Black renters paying more than 30 percent of their incomes in rent, and 59 percent of Latinos also feeling the same strain.²² The consequences of high rents are not only financial. Extreme rent burdens impact health, with children being particularly vulnerable.²³

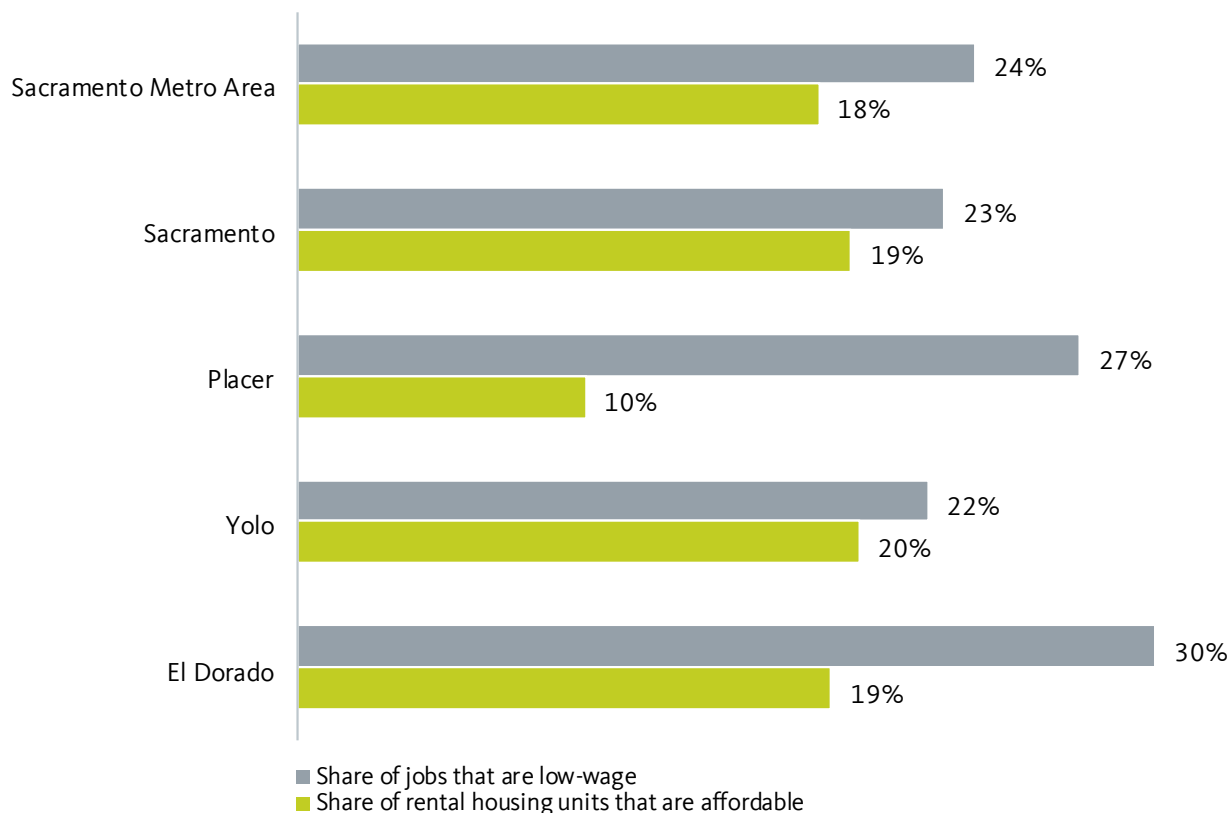
For Black homeowners, the situation is equally dire. In Sacramento County, Black homeownership in the 1960s was among the highest for California's urban centers. But by 2015 Black homeownership was among the lowest in the United States.²⁴ As renters of color struggle to afford their housing

costs, they have fewer funds to set aside for retirement or to eventually purchase a home. The hardship posed by high rents is compounded by the low wages typically paid in the region. In the Sacramento metro area, as illustrated by the chart below, 24 percent of jobs are low-wage, meaning they pay \$1,250 per month or less, but only 18 percent of rental units are affordable, even to households with low-wage earners.²⁵

Much is now at stake. In recent years, burgeoning development in downtown Sacramento and the construction of amenities and a sports stadium have captured the public's attention. But while an effort to attract newcomers from technology industries has been the focus, the needs of existing residents have grown more urgent. Rents have escalated dramatically, to the extent that rents rose faster in Sacramento in 2016 than anywhere else in the nation.²⁶ Homelessness has grown into a crisis of epic proportions, jolting the city and county into action after two homeless residents died sleeping in the frigid cold on the steps of City Hall.²⁷

There is a shortage of rental units that are affordable to low-wage workers.

Share of Low-Wage Jobs and Affordable Rental Housing Units by County, 2014



Source: PolicyLink/PERE analysis of housing data from the U.S. Census Bureau and jobs data from the 2012 Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics.

Note: Data represent a 2010 through 2014 average.

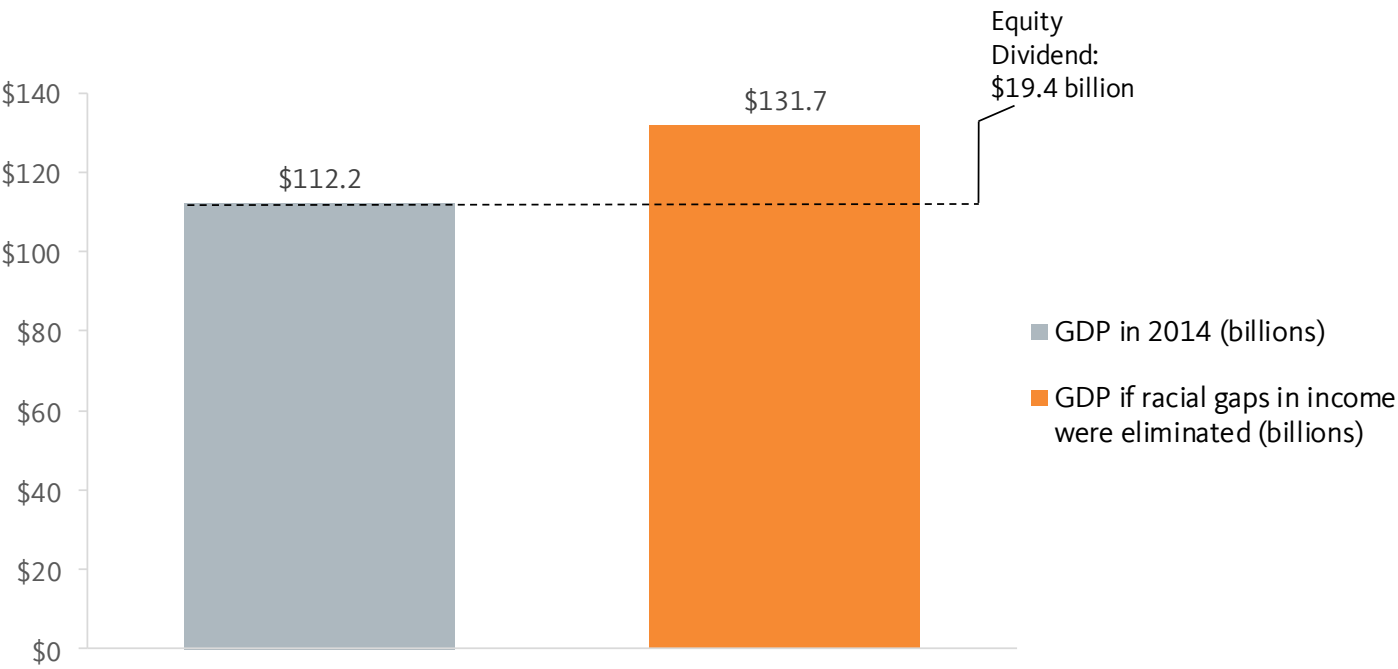
An unprecedented joint meeting of the Sacramento City Council and Sacramento County Board of Supervisors resulted from this tragedy. It will take this type of official collaboration, along with the engagement of affected community residents and an intentional focus on racial equity to abate the crisis and begin to address the region’s housing needs in a comprehensive manner. Inclusionary zoning should be revisited and incorporated into a long-range vision, as it has proven to be an effective strategy in multiple jurisdictions.²⁸ In doing so, decision makers will come to the realization that economic and commercial development is not inconsistent with effective neighborhood revitalization. Rather, it is a key component of bringing equitable and sustainable growth—not at the expense of current residents, but with their robust participation and to their benefit.²⁹

Racial inequities hinder economic prosperity

Sacramento’s diversity is a major asset that has the potential to fuel innovation and foster economic success. However, inequities and disparities are holding the region back.³⁰ To build a more equitable and sustainable local economy, Sacramento must actively take steps to better connect its communities of color to affordable housing, high-opportunity jobs, and pathways leading to economic mobility. Leaders must address the systems and barriers that hinder growth and prosperity for all residents. Doing so will improve the economy for everyone. If there were no racial inequities in income, the Sacramento region could gain \$19 billion in economic output every year.³¹

Sacramento’s GDP would have been over \$19 billion higher in 2014 if racial gaps in income were closed.

Actual GDP and Estimated GDP without Racial Gaps in Income, 2014



Source: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series; Bureau of Economic Analysis.

A Policy Agenda for Health Equity and Inclusive Growth in Sacramento

Local advocates and activists have worked for decades in Sacramento to gain the traction needed to spur policymakers to take action to address these challenges, yet they have had only limited success. Many of these advocates—including members of the Healthy Sacramento Coalition—adamantly believe that housing and land use are the lynchpins to advancing equity. Moreover, because racial bias and racist attitudes have been at the core of prior flawed policies, advocates believe race must be directly acknowledged and used as the frame to reverse past practices and develop new systems that are inclusive and just. They seek to implement a coordinated approach to systems change that uses a racial equity lens.

Addressing the historic inequities in Sacramento will benefit all of the region's residents, not just people of color. Consider that had the racial gaps in income been closed, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Sacramento region would have been more than \$19 billion higher just in 2014.³² Dismantling discriminatory land use policies and prioritizing the housing needs of low-income people and people of color will promote inclusive growth and health equity.

Leaders in the private, public, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors must commit to putting all residents on the path to economic security through equity-focused strategies and policies to grow good jobs, invest in human capital, remove barriers, and expand opportunities for communities of color currently being left behind. We recommend the following steps to advancing an “all-in” Sacramento.

I. Increase access to high-quality, affordable homes and prevent displacement

Housing is the lynchpin of opportunity. The location and quality of the home you can afford affects not only your living space and household budget, but also determines the quality of your schools, the length of your commute, your proximity to health care, and more. Unfortunately, in the Sacramento region, 64 percent of Black renters and 59 percent of Latino renters are paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs.³³ Some key strategies to address Sacramento's housing challenges include the following.

Protect current residents. Given the extreme shortage of affordable housing, it is essential to protect homeowners and tenants from being pushed out of their neighborhoods. Proactive measures can be used to identify areas at risk for displacement.³⁴ Measures that will protect existing residents include protection from eviction and rent increases, foreclosure prevention, and zoning policy that limits the scale of development.

Maintain affordable units. Currently, the number of rental units affordable to low-wage workers is insufficient. This means that it is critical to preserve the current stock of affordable units. Although housing subsidies would be most effective to reduce rent burden and maintain affordability, obtaining funding from federal subsidies seems unlikely in the current political climate. Multiple approaches will therefore be required, including the preservation and protection strategies listed here, as well as income strategies that will increase the minimum wage and expand the number of jobs that pay fair wages. It is also necessary to preserve existing units of

Several cities have stemmed displacement by preserving existing units:

- In Cleveland, property owners who rehabilitate multifamily structures and meet green building standards are eligible for tax abatement.³⁵
- In Washington, DC, grants and loans are available to assist owners of single-family homes make repairs to address building code violations and health and safety concerns.³⁶
- In Dallas, loans are available to enable low-income homeowners to make major repairs, such as roofing and heating, and repayment is deferred.³⁷

affordable housing through efforts such as code enforcement, rent escrow programs, rental registry programs, and incentivizing multifamily property owners to make needed repairs.

Revisit inclusionary zoning. Housing advocates in Sacramento have struggled for years to find effective ways to address zoning. In 2008, they won passage of a measure that required that 15 percent of development projects be set aside for low-income occupants, only to have the policy tied up by legal challenges. By 2014, the policy had been completely dismantled.³⁸ It is incumbent upon policymakers and stakeholders in the region to revisit the strategy of set-asides and related approaches to inclusionary zoning. These include incentives such as density bonuses and other inducements that relax certain restrictions regarding parking, height limits, and building occupancy in exchange for including affordable units in development projects. Other approaches include granting variances in zoning to allow developers more latitude to construct affordable housing in a manner that deviates from local codes, and could also extend to housing built near transit lines, and mixed-use housing incorporated into developments such as retail shopping centers or schools.

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

A skilled workforce is the key to Sacramento's success in the global economy of the 21st century. By 2020, approximately 44 percent of jobs in California will require at least an associate's degree. Currently, only 23 percent of Latinos in the Sacramento region have this level of education.³⁹ The county must grow its talent pool through public education and workforce strategies that equip low-income children and workers with the skills they need to succeed. The strategy that will pay the greatest dividend would be one that addresses the needs of young people of color in Sacramento. Community stakeholders interviewed for this report were adamant that closing gaps in education attainment—including high school graduation and college admission and completion—must be a priority. They drew connections between lack of adequate education and high levels of unemployment and underemployment, underscoring the skills mismatch between youth of color and available jobs, particularly jobs in the technology sector. They also decried disproportionate levels of incarceration and interaction with the criminal justice system as a symptom of ineffective education and lack of employment. The mayor of Sacramento, Darrell Steinberg, has expressly stated his intent to make youth a priority for his administration, providing internships and job training programs.⁴⁰ It makes sense to capitalize on this mutual concern and take steps to support the quality of life of Sacramentans through strategies such as the following.

Provide high-quality cradle-to-career education. Children from low-income families often face persistent gaps in critical indicators of long-term educational success. Education advocates should pursue neighborhood-level cradle-to-career systems that provide children with the health, social, and educational supports they need to succeed. These wraparound educational supports have proven successful in initiatives such as Promise Neighborhoods and the pioneering Harlem Children's Zone. Although Oak Park was unsuccessful in its 2016 Promise Neighborhoods application submission, the organizations involved remain committed to improving educational outcomes for children.⁴¹

Increase resources to support youth. One strategy is to revisit the Measure Y campaign that was narrowly defeated in June 2016. The measure would levy a 5 percent tax on businesses involved in the cultivation and manufacturing of marijuana and direct funds raised to support children and youth programs.

Expand health programs that improve health for youth of color. Programs such as the Reducing African American Child Death (RAACD) initiative are needed to cut the rate of child mortality in Sacramento, which is excessively high for African Americans. RAACD⁴² is a joint effort of philanthropy, community members, and the County Board of Supervisors; the initiative targets specific communities and provides resources and social services. Advocates should also consider implementing programming that aims to address the trauma impacting youth of color. For example, a trauma-informed approach to community revitalization could be incorporated into efforts, such as the model created by the Health Equity Institute at San Francisco State University.⁴³

Prepare youth for the workforce. Internships and summer jobs are vital to creating a successful cradle-to-career pipeline for Sacramento's young people. Youth need the paid opportunities to learn how to be effective in a work environment and to learn skills that will set them on a career path enabling them to become productive citizens. The youth internship program⁴⁴ currently in place at the City of Sacramento should be restructured to emphasize on-the-job training for a significant length of time that yields useful, relevant employment experience. The focus should be on quality rather than quantity. For participants to acquire and develop the skills that will serve them well in a 21st century economy, they must spend more hours with the organization or company that is providing them with the work experience. Furthermore, training prior to being placed and support during the internship are also critical to ensure that youth are adequately prepared to succeed. After completing training, program participants should have regular opportunities for check-ins and support as the internship continues.

III. Create healthy, opportunity-rich neighborhoods for all

High-quality neighborhoods and public infrastructure are fundamental building blocks for both health and economic opportunity. This premise aligns with the Healthy Sacramento Coalition's focus on 15 zip codes with consistently high rates of poor health outcomes related to chronic disease and mental health. Advocates should explore strategies to increase connectivity and mobility for underserved communities.

Target infrastructure resources to expand opportunity. The need for additional investment in the public transportation infrastructure was mentioned in several interviews. Furthermore, an analysis completed for the Sacramento equity profile confirms that more than one in nine Black workers earning less than \$15,000 per year depend on public transit to get to work.⁴⁵ Additional bus service is critical to addressing some of the transportation challenges in Sacramento, and for better connecting low-income residents to employment opportunities as development continues. Underserved areas should be prioritized for investment, and transit riders in these communities should be included in the planning process for designation of any new or expanded routes.

IV. Expand democracy and justice

Unfortunately, many low-income Sacramento residents feel dissuaded from fully participating in efforts to enhance their neighborhoods. Other residents feel over-surveilled by the police or unjustly ensnared in the court system. Efforts to expand both democracy and justice should include the following:

Effectively engage residents in decision making. Sacramento is fortunate to have a robust history of community leadership, activism, and advocacy. Community organizations have pioneered the development of strategic approaches to address the most intractable problems that plague the most vulnerable residents. They have developed significant expertise in arenas such as land use and planning, environmental justice, health equity, and racial equity. It is their expertise and wisdom that must be at the core of the policy and systems change efforts being undertaken. Advocates should continue to partner with community organizations and residents to eliminate barriers to community participation in the policymaking process. Partners should be providing information and resources to residents whose first language may not be English, and integrating the arts and culture of diverse communities throughout city planning and development activities.

Invest in rehabilitation over incarceration. In Sacramento County, a radical reinvestment is needed, moving away from mass incarceration toward rehabilitation, including pathways to living-wage jobs for the formerly incarcerated, mental health services, and trauma-informed care, with a concentrated investment in the adult felony re-entry population. Alternatives to current sentencing models should be explored at the county level. This could be accomplished in a few ways:

- County data needs to be collected and reported to the public in a transparent way, which breaks down charges and sentencing by race.
- Split sentencing is an option for those eligible under AB-109 who are able to serve a portion of their time in jail, and the later portion of their sentence is served through community supervision.
- The City of Sacramento has made an effort through the Mayor's Gang Task Force to make an investment in prevention.
- In addition to prevention investments, an investment is needed in the 1 percent deep drivers of violence, such as the Advance Peace Model⁴⁶ that has already proven successful in Richmond, California.

Align with broader reform efforts. To the greatest extent possible, reform efforts should not be started anew or aim to “recreate the wheel.” Instead, campaigns should build on the existing capacity, talent, and skills that abound in Sacramento. This will help to minimize competition for precious funding among nonprofit organizations, and encourage more strategic partnerships that can help to achieve impact at scale. To that end, resident mobilization efforts around community safety in Sacramento should engage neighborhood leaders and advocates who are already working with the target populations that we are trying to reach. Advocates should determine how to best leverage some of the work that is already being done, as shown in the following examples:

- One of six milestones included in the My Brother's Keeper Sacramento Action Plan focuses on ensuring that youth remain safe from violent crime and have a second chance.
- Organizations comprising the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color in Sacramento have prioritized promoting alternatives to school discipline among their initial areas of focus.

V. Increase the economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers

Economic security entails having enough money to cover basic needs and enough savings to weather unanticipated setbacks and invest for the future. However, achieving economic security can be particularly challenging for unemployed or underemployed workers, such as the 42 percent of Black workers with less than a high school diploma who are unemployed in the Sacramento region.⁴⁷ Increasing mobility and opportunity is critical to the health and well-being of families, neighborhoods, and local economies. Ways to put low-income families and workers on a path to economic security include:

Build assets. Wealth stripping can be prevented and financial security supported by pursuing incentivized savings accounts. Incentivized savings accounts are a special type of savings account designed to encourage low-income families to grow their financial reserves. Typically, participants must meet certain income limits to qualify. Cities have implemented matched or incentivized savings accounts, also known as individual development accounts, with a dollar-for-dollar match for savings toward higher education, homeownership, or starting a business.

Ensure access to new development and investment opportunities. Currently, an organizing effort is underway to inform the implementation of marijuana policy in the City of Sacramento. City data shows that during the criminalization era, marijuana arrests disproportionately impacted the African American community. The war on drugs has been a major driver of poverty and joblessness among families and children of color in Sacramento. For the last year, the city has been developing a local marijuana industry that will primarily benefit White entrepreneurs and investors, many of whom do not even live in the city. Organizers are advocating for policies to ensure that communities of color have the necessary supports to start businesses in the marijuana industry, and that the tax revenues generated by the sale of legal marijuana go to support youth development, health, and economic development in the most impacted neighborhoods. We recommend that the city adopt a racial and health equity perspective when it comes to developing a local marijuana industry, and that it follow the recommendations of the R+HEMP (Racial and Health Equity in Marijuana Policy) network led by the California Urban Partnership and others.

Conclusion

Sacramento is at a crossroads. The land use and development decisions made today will chart a course for the region's future—either down a path marred by inequality and stagnancy, or down a path committed to inclusive growth that fosters shared prosperity and greater economic mobility for all. It is important for leaders to recognize how central equity is to achieving this vision of inclusion and prosperity. While many barriers to change exist, leaders across sectors, such as the Healthy Sacramento Coalition, are already taking steps to advance racial inclusion and equitable growth, but need help reaching the necessary scale to tackle inequities. By incorporating an equity framework into economic and community development efforts, and tapping into the wisdom and lived experience of residents, Sacramento's leaders will bolster the region's competitiveness and help all Sacramentans see greater economic inclusion and sustained benefits.

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*In scarcity, we bare the teeth
Selling them off one by one
Appetites in search of the highest price
No longer able to smile at or chew on
What it means to live the good life*



Mural and poem developed by local poet, Tim Kahl and artist William Leung, for “Words on Walls” project inspired by the Del Paso neighborhood in Sacramento. (Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission / Alberto Mercado)



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