



An Introduction to the City of Austin Equity Office

Brion Oaks

Chief Equity Officer

City of Austin

P: (512) 974-7979

F: (512) 974-2833

Brion.oaks@austintexas.gov



Vision

We want Austin to be the most livable city for ALL in the country

Mission

To provide leadership, guidance, and insight on equity to improve the quality of life for Austinites and achieve the vision of making Austin the most livable city in the nation for ALL.

Areas of Concentrated Poverty

Percent Poverty by Census Tract, Austin MSA, 2010-2014, ACS 5-Year Data

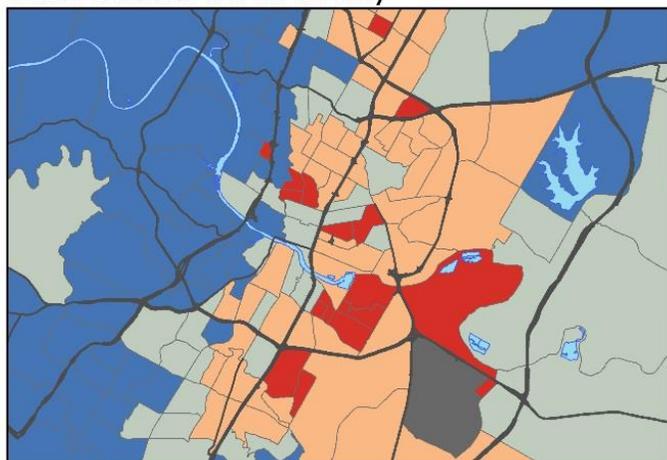
Legend

- County
- Highways
- Water
- Airport

Percent Poverty by Census Tract

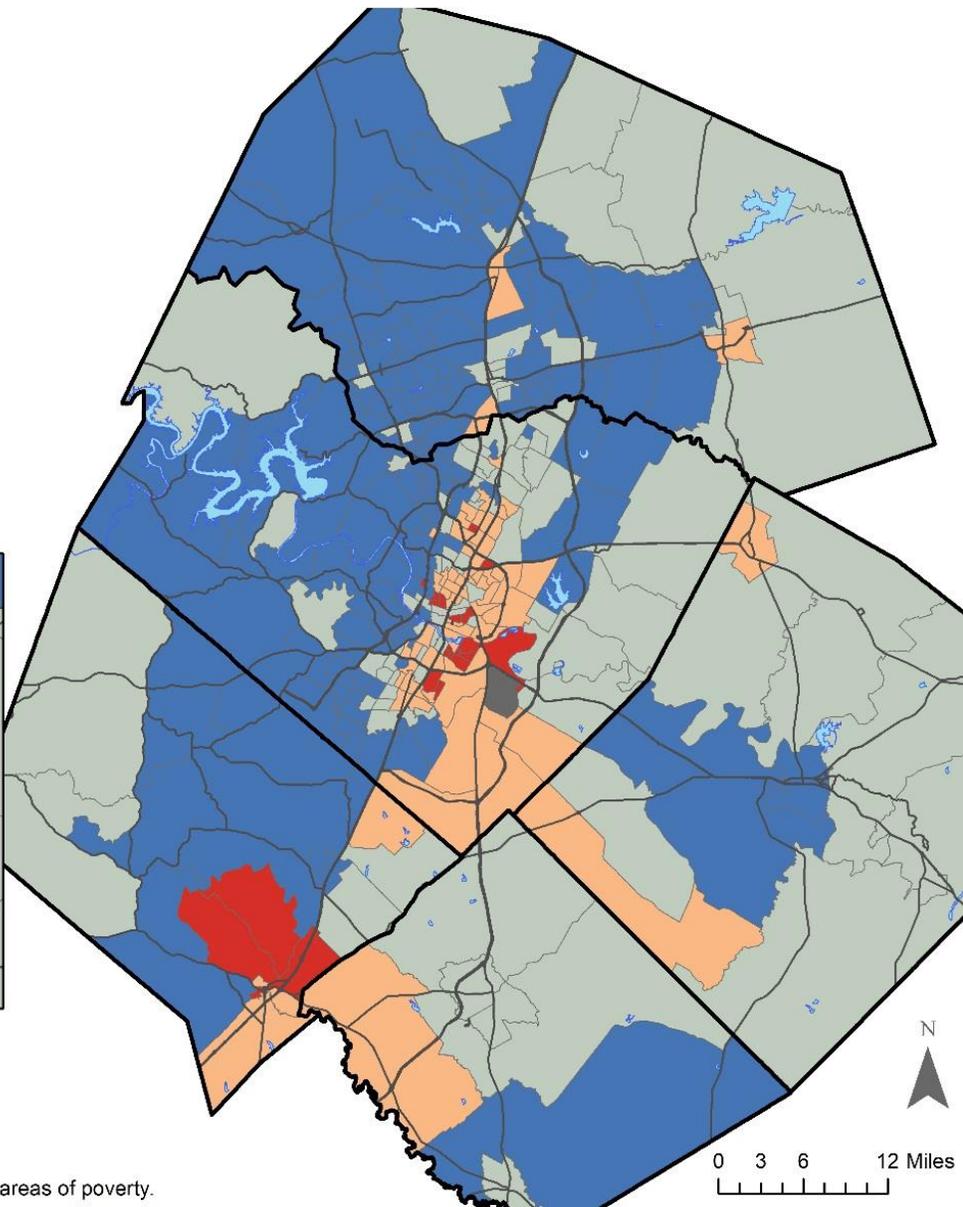
- Less than 10%
- 10% to 20%
- 20% to 40%
- Over 40%

Inset: Central Travis County



 Community Advancement Network

Map produced by CAN from U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year, 2010-2014, American Community Survey data. (Table C17002: Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in Past 12 Months) Census tracts with high student populations tend to correlate with high areas of poverty.



Brookings reports people living in concentrated poverty face

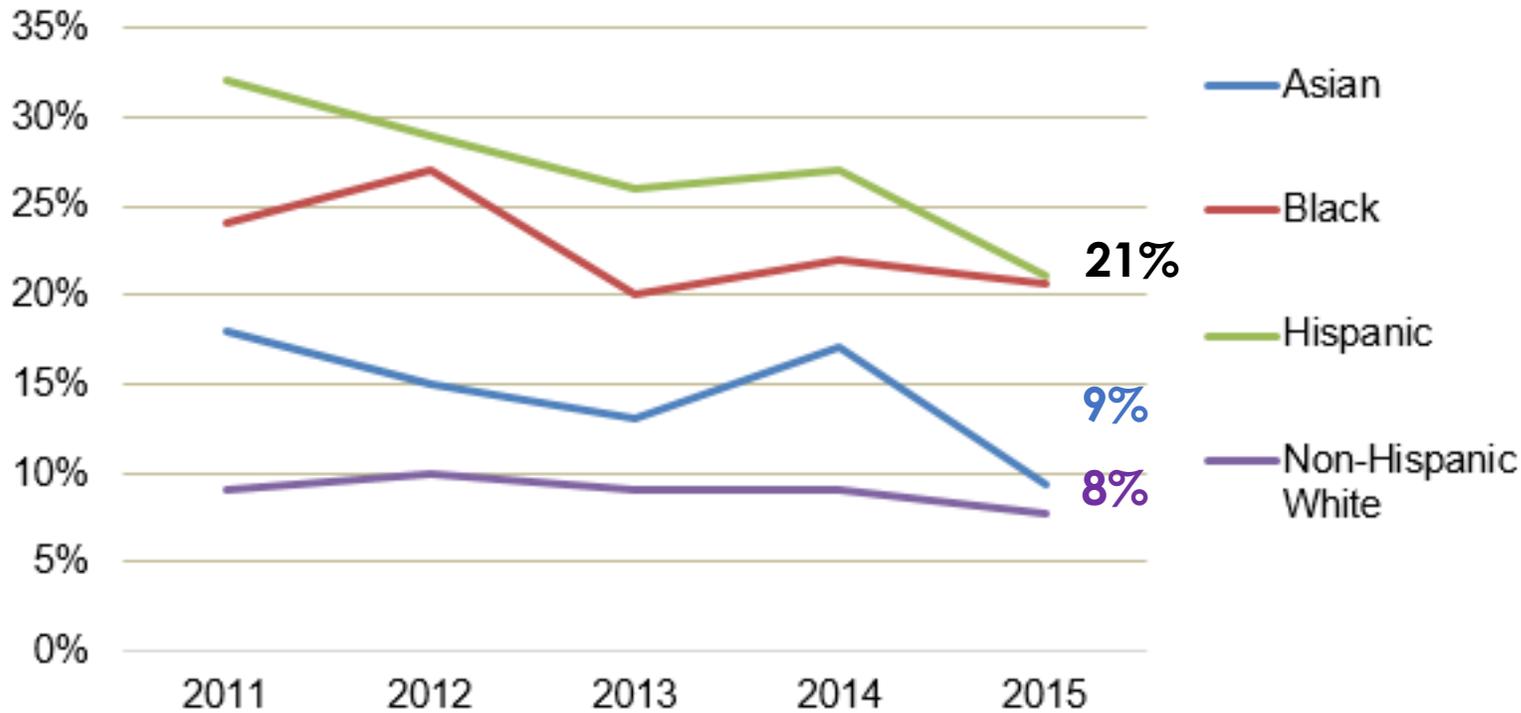
- higher crime rates
- poorer physical health
- low-performing schools
- higher drop out rates
- poor job-seeking networks



0 3 6 12 Miles

Disparities in poverty

Percent of Individuals in Travis County with Incomes Below the Poverty Level by Race and Ethnicity



The poverty rate for Hispanics and Blacks is **twice** the rate for Asians and Whites.



Children are most likely to be poor



City of Austin

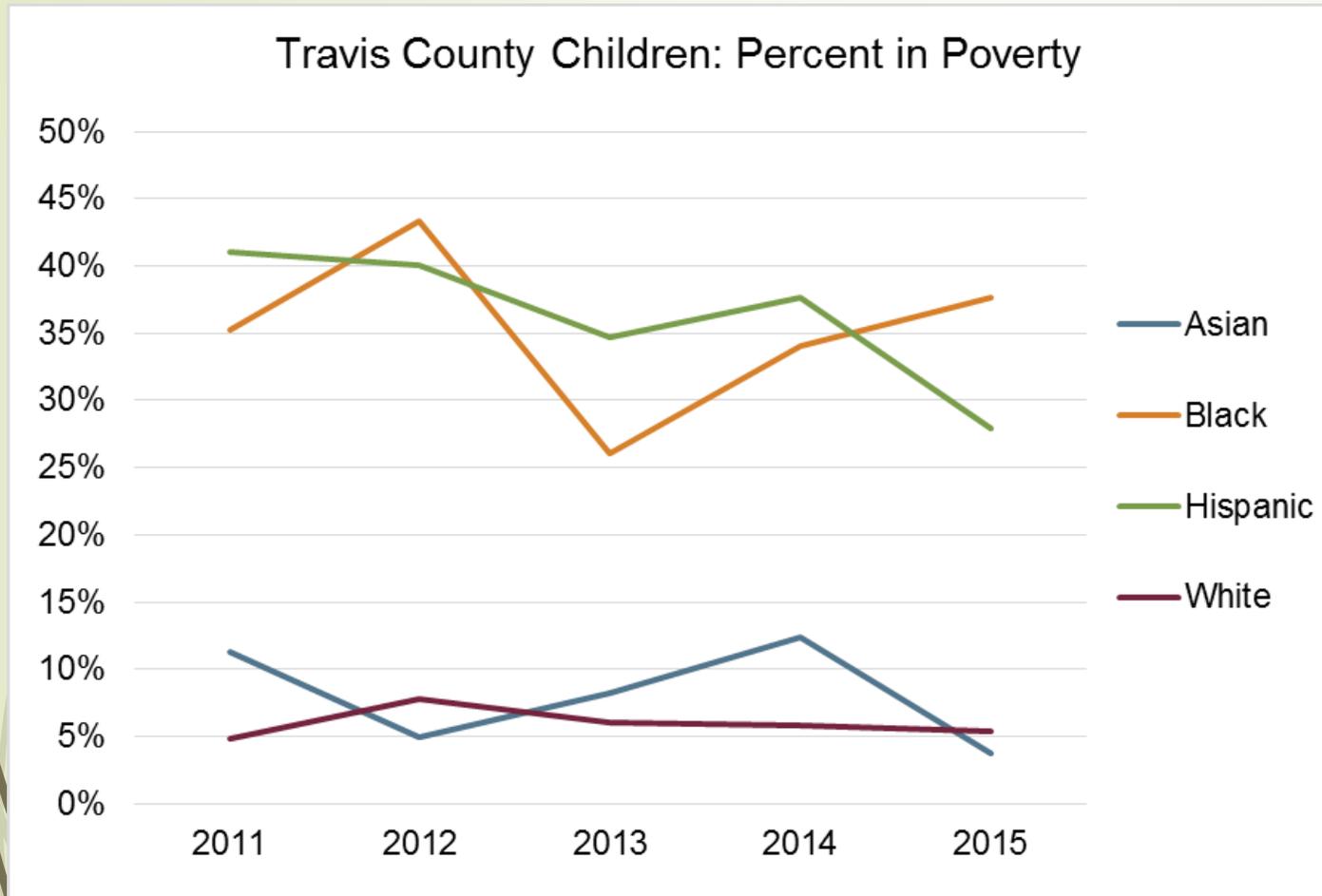
20% of those under the age of 18 live in poverty

Travis County

18% of those under the age of 18 live in poverty

Source: American Community Survey,
1-Year Estimates, 2015

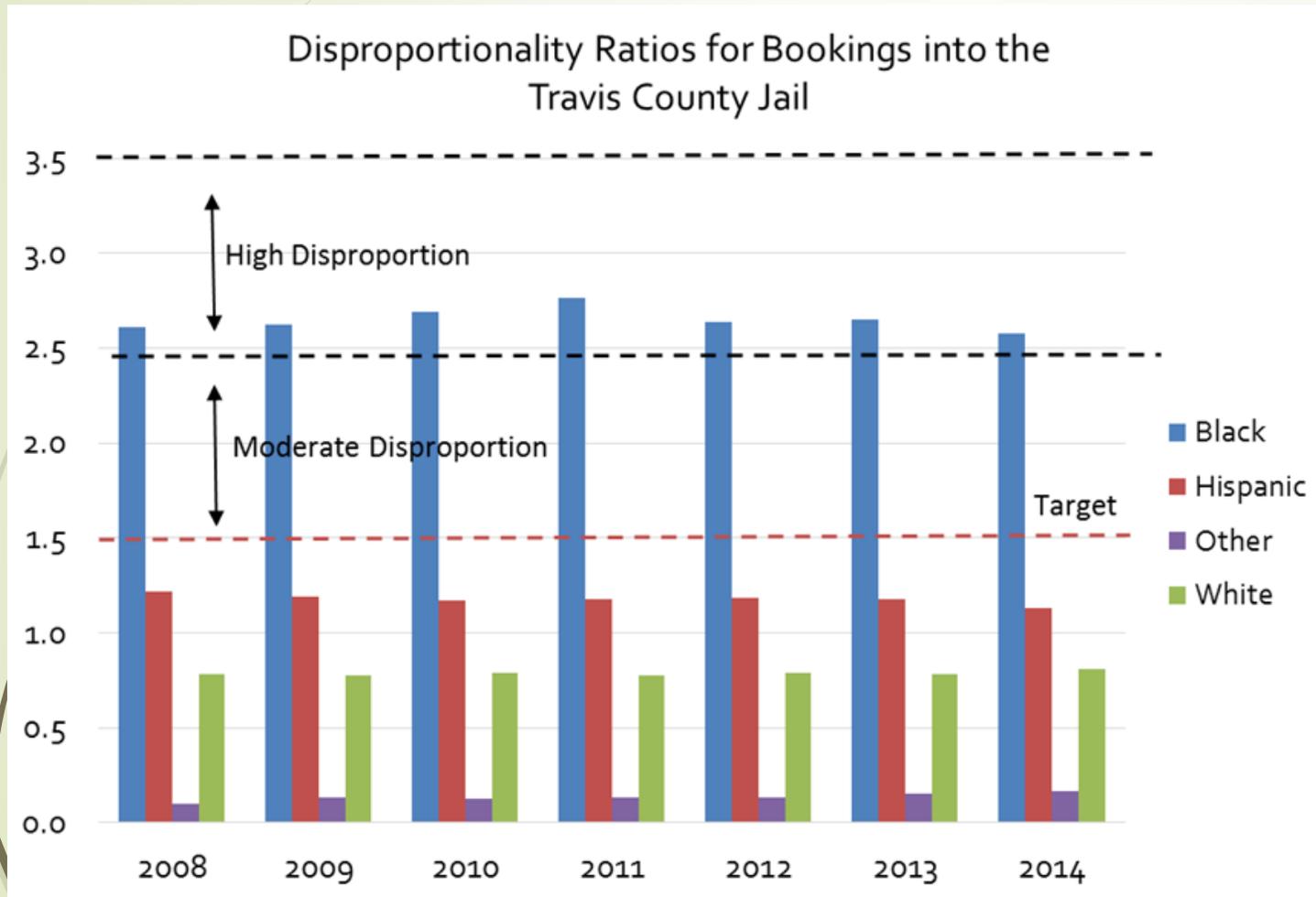
Child poverty disparities, Travis County



Hispanic and Black children are 5 to 7 times more likely to live in poverty than White or Asian children.

Source: American Community Survey, 1-Year data, 2015

Proportionality of Jail Bookings



Having a criminal history impacts your ability to...

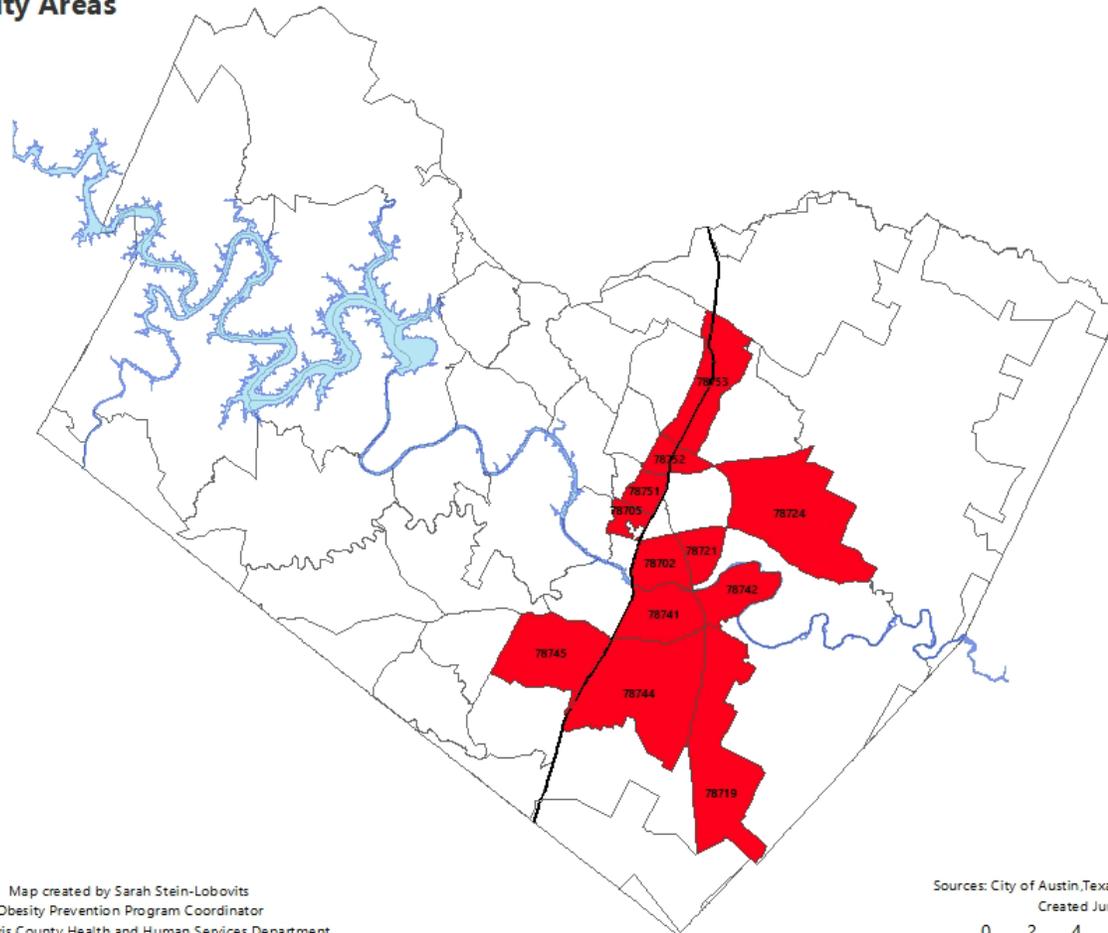
- get a job
- rent a home
- move back with your family
- get a loan
- pursue certain professions

Equity and Food Security

The priority areas identified in the map above represent zip codes with more than 5,000 SNAP recipients and include census tracts with more than 25% of residents living at or below the poverty line. These priority areas also include the top 10 zip codes for food insecurity identified by Texas Hunger Initiative and overlay with the Eastern Crescent. These priority zip codes areas are:

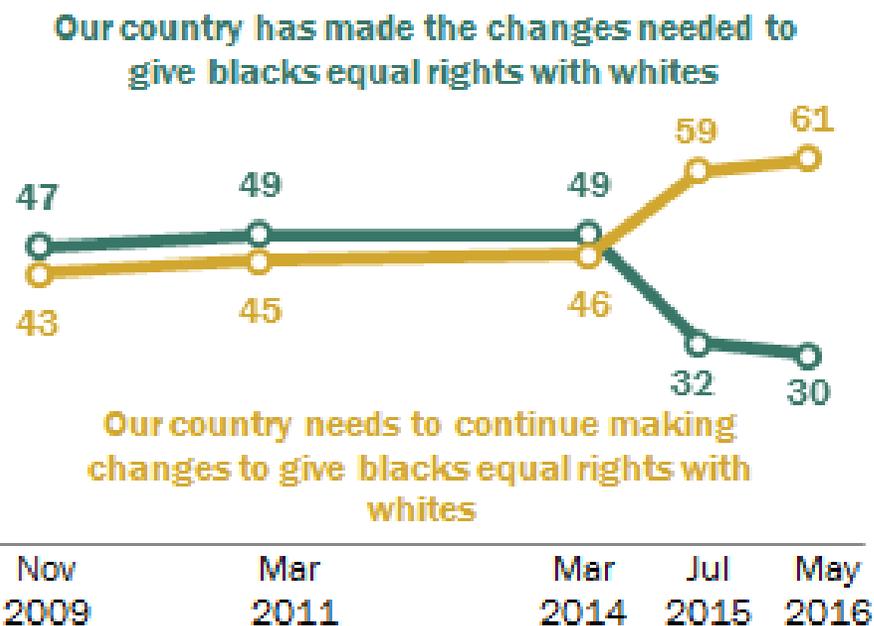
- 78702 78742
- 78705 78744
- 78719 78745
- 78721 78751
- 78724 78752
- 78741 78753

Food Access Resolution Priority Areas



About six-in-ten Americans say more changes needed to achieve racial equality

% saying ...



Note: Voluntary responses of "Neither/Both equally" and "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

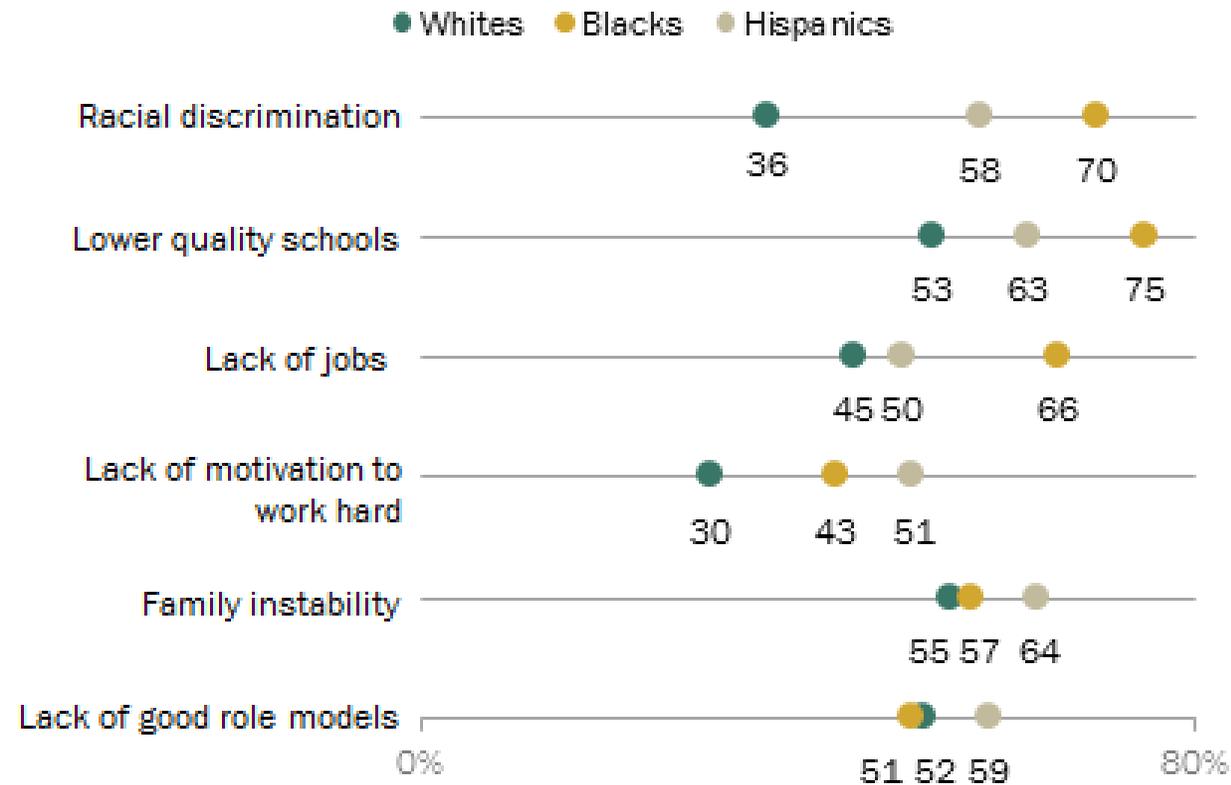
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 29-May 8, 2016.

Q6F2.

"On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"

Blacks are about twice as likely as whites to point to discrimination as a major reason that some blacks have a harder time getting ahead

% saying each of these is a major reason that blacks in the U.S. may have a harder time getting ahead than whites



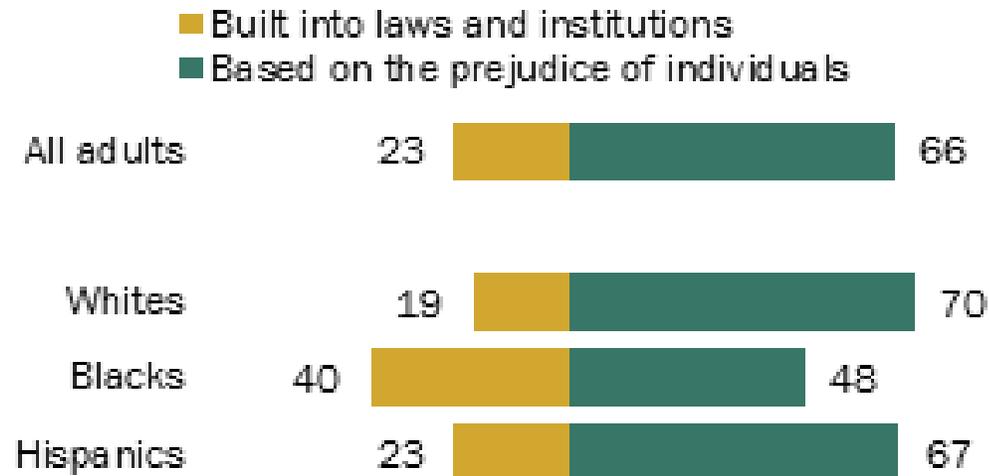
Note: Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 29-May 8, 2016. Q24a-f.

"On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"

Most Americans say individual, not institutional, racism is the bigger problem; blacks are divided

% saying discrimination ____ is the bigger problem when it comes to discrimination against black people in the U.S. today



Note: "All adults" includes adults of all races. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Voluntary responses of "Both," "Neither/There is no discrimination" and "Don't know/Refused" not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Feb. 29-May 8, 2016. Q42. "On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart"

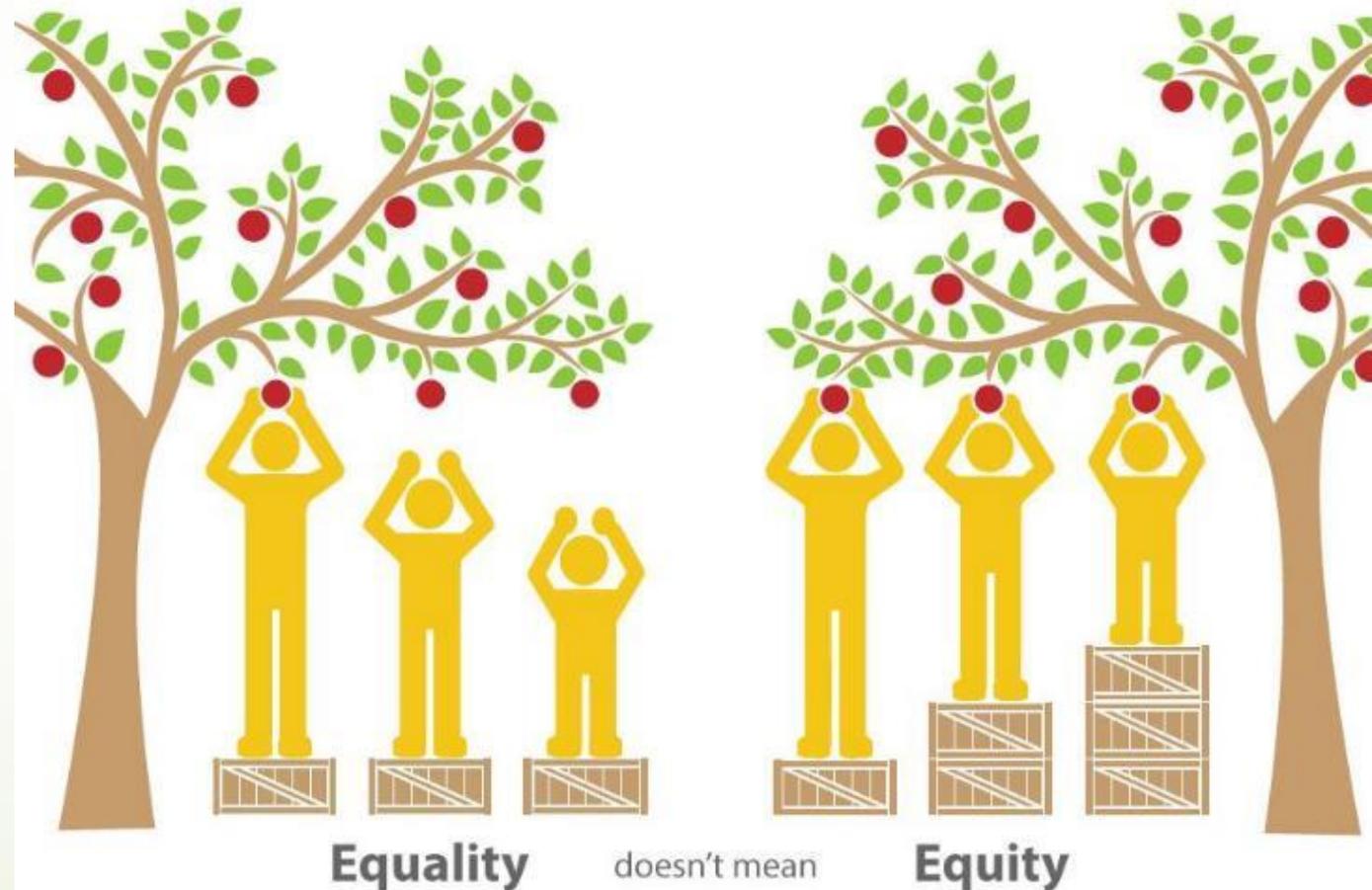
What does equity look like to you?

COA Equity Statement

Racial equity is the condition when race no longer predicts a person's quality of life outcomes in our community.

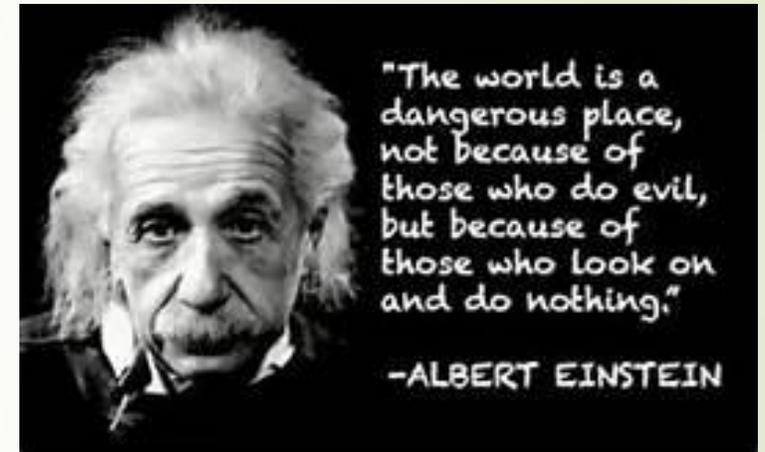
The City recognizes that race is the primary determinant of social equity and therefore we begin the journey toward social equity with this definition.

The City of Austin recognizes historical and structural disparities and a need for alleviation of these wrongs by critically transforming its institutions and creating a culture of equity.



Why Government & Our City

- ▶ Government has the ability to
 - ▶ Create inequity
 - ▶ Create Equity
 - ▶ Improve overall quality of life for residents



Acknowledging How We Got Here

Inheriting inequality

“As greater Austin booms, the poisonous legacy of segregation continues to cut off the African-American population from economic opportunities and its own cultural anchors, threatening the whole region's potential. American-Statesman three-part series.”

<http://projects.statesman.com/news/economic-mobility/>



Bias

- The evaluation of one group and its members relative to another.
- We all carry bias, or prejudice. Acting on biases can be discriminatory and can create negative outcomes for particular groups.



Source: Unconscious (Implicit) Bias and Health Disparities: Where Do We Go from Here?



Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates
consciously

Example – Sign in the
window of an apartment
building – “we don’t rent to
_____”

Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates
sub-consciously

Example – a property
manager doing more
criminal background
checks on African
Americans than whites.



Caption: Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery.



Caption: A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans.

Austin's Opportunity to Drive Equity

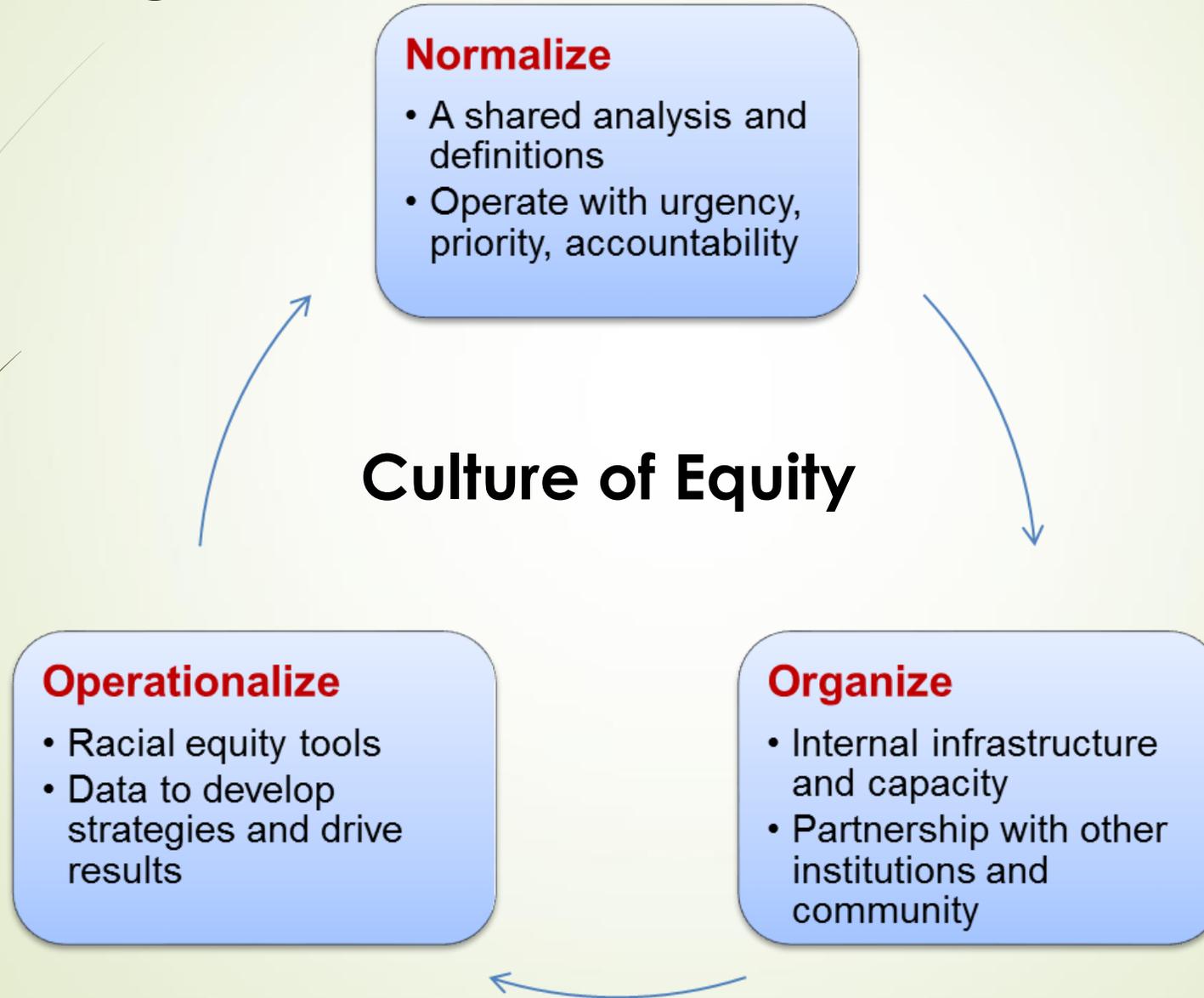
It's all about CHOICE POINTS

- Choice Points are decision-making opportunities that influence outcomes
- The cumulative impacts of small choices can lead to BIG influence on outcomes and equity
- When we are conscious of choice points and the related impact, we're less likely to replicate implicit bias and the status quo, and we open new possibilities for equitable change.

Key Areas of Departmental CHOICE

- **Planning:** What to change and prioritize in programs?
- **Budgeting:** what items do we add or cut and what initiatives get the funding?
- **Personnel:** who to hire, retain, promote, or develop as leaders
- **Policy Development:** what to propose or modify?
- **Practices:** routines/habits and or expectations to set

Building a Framework for Equity



Lead Priority: Development of an Equity Assessment Tool

Operationalize

- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

- ❑ Equity Assessment Tool – is a protocol or equity primer that will systematically integrate deliberate consideration and consciousness of how our decisions as city government within choice points can have a positive or negative impact on equity in our community.
- ❑ Utilizing Strategic Co-creation Process
- ❑ Engage community stakeholders
- ❑ Goal to pilot with 5 or more Departments and secured 8
- ❑ Pair assessments with budget requests

- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

Equity Assessment Tool Pilot Departments

- Austin Water
- Economic Development
- Human Resources
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Health
- Public Library
- Public Works
- Transportation



COURAGE...

...is contagious

Equity Action Team Visioning

Operationalize

- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

Core Elements of an Equity Assessment tool:

- Lead with Race/Ethnicity
- Focus on human centered design and institutional empathy
- Engage residents in decision-making, especially those adversely affected by the current condition
- Bring conscious attention to racial inequities and impact before decisions get made
- Help us avoid or minimize adverse impacts and unintended consequences
- Prevent racism from occurring in the first place and to get ahead of the curve
- Affirm our commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Continue to evolve organically

Courageous Conversation COMPASS



Outline of Equity Assessment Tool

- ❑ Introduction – Brief historical account and Council Resolution for context
- ❑ Departmental Analysis – A look at the department's cultural and commitment to principles that drive equity
- ❑ Budget – A scan of potential for realignments and insight on how community is included in budget planning
- ❑ Community Engagement – Gauges your practices and quality of interaction with the community
- ❑ Alignment – Evaluates opportunities to drive addressing disparities within Council's six priority outcomes

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12_boHTxystzcauPM7_pfcHGjr-r9elXrb5BdKiTbTk8/edit?usp=drive_web

Equity Office Partnership

Operationalize

- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

Consider overlaying an equity lens to your initiatives:

1. Know the History: Consider historical context of projects. Does the project address events that have negatively impacted communities of color? Acknowledge them and create space for communities to share as to not repeat the same mistakes.

2. Review & Monitor the Data: What are the data and projected impact of the project? What do the data tell us? Are they disaggregated by race/ethnicity?

3. Engage the Community: How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement and what were the efforts to reach most marginalized populations and bring those voices into consideration?

5. Advance Racial Equity: Does this project have an opportunity to advance equity within Council Six Outcome Priorities and reduce/eliminate a disparity?

6. Analyze Unintended Consequences: Are there any possible unintended outcomes for this project? Could the project have a negative impact on communities of color and/or other marginalized populations?