

**MEASURE**  
Community Led. Data Driven.



# ADDRESSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN AUSTIN: RESIDENTIAL TECHNOLOGY STUDY

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# What We Do At MEASURE

MEASURE works to use data and education to mobilize communities to fight structural racism and eliminate social disparities. Through our CARE Model process and other tools, we ensure communities and institutions embrace lived-experience data of Powerful Black, Brown and Multiracial/Ethnic Communities to deconstruct underlying narratives and work together to find equitable solutions.

Learn more at [www.wemeasure.org](http://www.wemeasure.org)

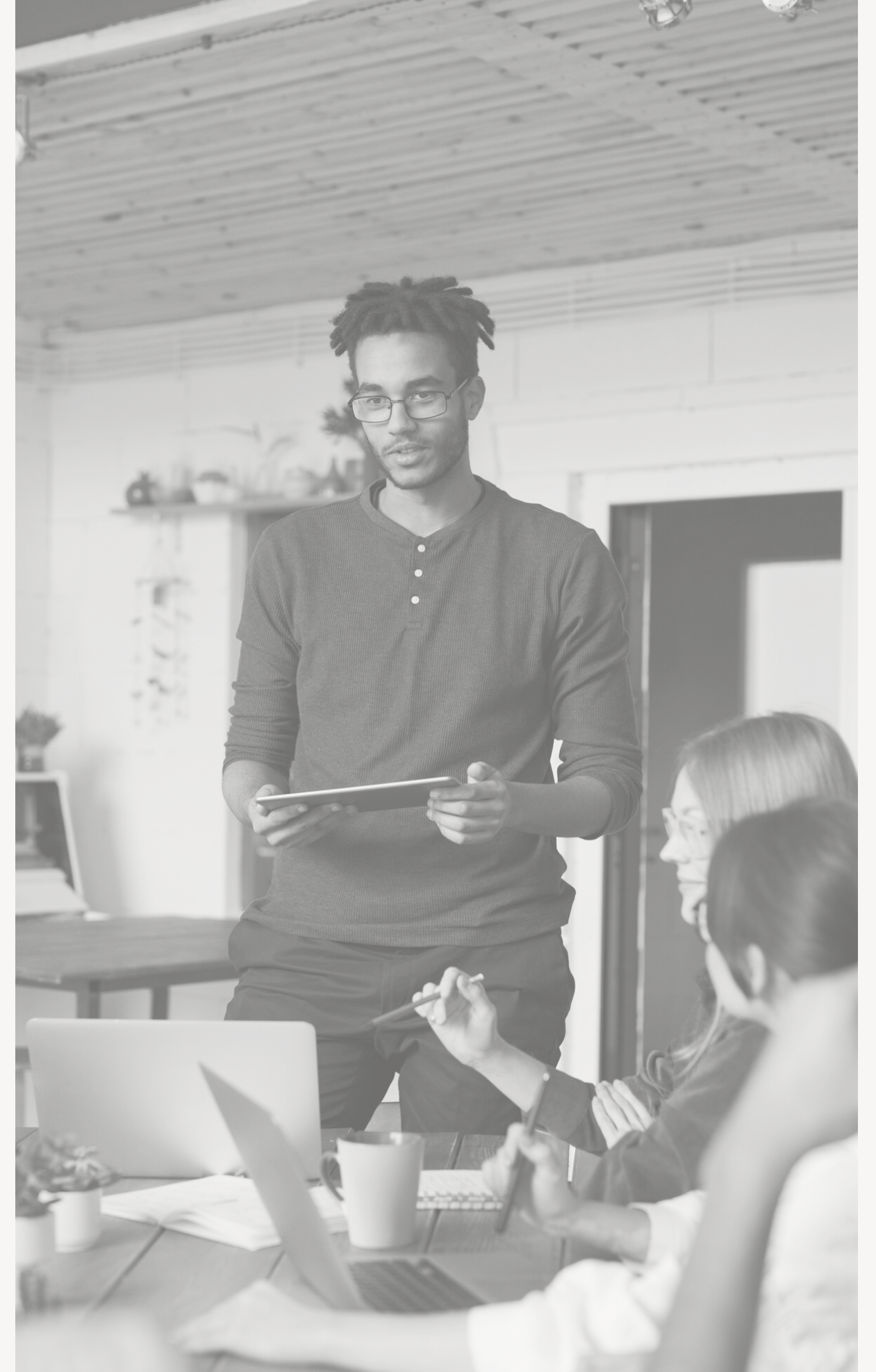
## Problem We Are Solving

Lived-experience and quantitative data about complex social problems impacting Powerful Black, Brown and Multiracial/Ethnic Communities are not used effectively for justice due to racism, a lack of equitable data tools and village support.



# Our Theory Of Change

**IF** we support Powerful Black, Brown and Multiracial/Ethnic Communities by providing free data support, training and work to cultivate community power-building to fight structural racism, **THEN** Powerful Black, Brown and Multiracial/Ethnic Communities will be equipped to use data to mobilize and eliminate social disparities ultimately resulting in a world free of health, education, justice and economic inequities.





# Our Anti-Racist Data Support Tools

## MEASURE CARE Model

This 3-6 month partnership with a MEASURE facilitator will result in a clear understanding and plan of how your solution aims to support your community.

## Equity Focus Group Tool

Build highly-specific, lived experience feedback from community members with lived experience through our equity focus groups.

## Community Survey Design Tool

Gather insights to take action with a professionally designed survey for your stakeholders with an equitable lens.

## Community Impact Metrics Tool

Identify the long-term intended impacts and measurable short-term outcomes to effectively address the issue you're seeking to change.



# HIGHLIGHTED EFG PROJECTS

BUILDING EQUITY IN THE AUSTIN CIVILIAN

CONSERVATION CORPS

CHILDREN'S OPTIMAL HEALTH

IT'S TIME TEXAS

BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

AUSTIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - WCWH

CITY OF AUSTIN WATERSHED PROJCT

PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC





DIGITAL INEQUITY IN AUSTIN, TEXAS  
UNPACKING THE HISTORY OF INJUSTICE

1928

MASTER PLAN CREATED

The 1928 Master Plan created a "Negro District" which required all Black Austinites to move to East Austin. This plan evolved into the segregation of the Hispanic/Latino community as well (2).



1953

UNDER-REPRESENTATION

In 1953, Austin adopted a model for city council based on "at large" positions, limiting place-based representation (4). In subsequent years "The Gentlemen's Agreement" was adopted. These systems prevented non-White groups from being able to win elections to the City Council.

1964

CIVIL RIGHTS

The Civil Rights Act was the second to the last act that threw out Jim Crow laws. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 dealt a crucial blow to discrimination in the workforce by making it illegal for any business, private or public, to practice discriminatory hiring (and firing) practices (9).

2000s

SOCIAL MEDIA

Modern social media emerges and quickly becomes a means for sharing information, making connections, and news updates. (11). Notably during the 2021 Winter Storm Uri many resources were being shared via social media and people without digital access were at a disadvantage.



FREEDMAN COMMUNITIES

Juneteenth, June 19, 1865 marked Black emancipation from slavery. An 1865 City Council meeting called for extreme policing and punishing of "idle" Black people (1); anti-Black violence was praised. During this time Freedman communities in Austin were established (1).

1865

REDLINING

Public policies like the National Housing Act of 1934, which established and reinforced housing segregation (also known as "redlining"), have contributed to unequal opportunities and have marginalized certain groups of



people (3). The echoes of this policy still influence our cityscapes. With educational funding tied to property taxes, and in extension the value of the housing in a neighborhood, redlining still contributes to the systematic denial of resources to Black and poor neighborhoods.

1934

DE-SEGREGATION OF SCHOOLS

Following the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision in Brown vs. Board of Education, the AISD Board of Trustees originally adopted a policy of integration (5).



I-35 DIVIDE & TECHNOLIS  
BLUEPRINT

In 1954, construction of I-35 began in Texas. In Austin, this created the "I-35 divide", physically dividing the city. Infrastructural developments were primarily allocated to areas west of I-35, which became predominantly White (6,7).

In 1957, a group of private leaders created vision for Austin becoming a tech hub (8). Several think tanks were held to further this vision.

1954-1957

SILICON HILLS

Austin started as a high-tech hub in the '80s, and was known as "Silicon Hills." The initial tech industries hosted in Austin included semiconductor (AMD, Samsung, Motorola/Freescale/NXP, Applied Materials), enterprise software (IBM, Trilogy, Tivoli, National Instruments) and computer hardware (Dell, IBM, Apple) (10).



1980

DIGITAL INCLUSION PROGRAMS

The Clinton administration began plans for creating programs and infrastructure to address the digital divide. The Bush administration succeed and developed policies counter to that of the Clinton administration and favored free-market solutions (8).

1990s

1995

Incorporated in 1995 by legendary community leaders, Sue Beckwith and Ana Sissett (1952-2009), Austin Free-Net was the first organization to wire city libraries and put computers in schools and community centers around Austin." (13)

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The novel COVID-19 pandemic quickly shifted operations to virtual platforms and closed many public spaces. The pandemic became a public health crisis disproportionately impacting Austin's Black and Brown communities also exacerbates existing economic inequities (12).

2020





# Background & Methodology



## Background

- Lack of equitable digital access
- Understand community members' lived experiences around accessing the internet and technology
- Find out what programs or services helped
- Find out what community members want in order to improve their digital access and skills

## Equity Focus Group Tool

Build highly-specific, lived experience feedback from community members with lived experience through our equity focus groups.

## Recruitment

- Recruitment occurred from September 2021 through January 2022
- Local community partners and individual outreach efforts using social media
- Radio public service announcements
- Distributions of fliers at local libraries and public places.

## Who Participated

- 54 participants
- English speakers
- Spanish speakers
- Dari speakers



# Data Collection & Analysis Strategy

- Data Collection: August 2021 - January 2022
- 9 virtual focus groups (zoom, dial in)
  - 6 in English language
  - 2 in Spanish language
  - 1 in Dari language
- Adaptive protocol
- Thematic analysis of data: January 2022





# REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Infrastructure and service inequities
- Privilege and existing access
- Skills, Learning, and Digital Literacy
- Navigation, Trust, and Adoption
- Perspectives from Dari and Spanish Language Focus Groups





# Opportunities & Reflections

- Partnering with trusted relationships
- Frontline roles in digital equity
- Improved consumer experience and options
- Nondigital approaches
- Winter Storm Uri
- Both wifi and cellular





# Conclusion

- Developing solutions that address systemic issues
- Digital literacy programs designed to support various demographic needs, age-specific needs, cultural differences, and languages
- Using existing platforms to support services in multiple languages
- Human-centered design
- Outreach and awareness
- Tech Connect Resource Guide



Our experience must inform  
change