

MARCH 2021

RACIAL  
**wealth**  
DIVIDE IN  
**Seattle**

PROSPERITY  
**NOW**

JPMORGAN CHASE & Co.

# The Racial Wealth Divide in Seattle, WA

Dear Reader,

Racial economic inequality is widespread throughout the United States with profound consequences for many communities. While this inequality is so prevalent that it is almost universal, it is rooted and shaped by unique local systemic and socio-economic conditions. The COVID-19 crisis has only intensified existing problems, leading, among other things, countless families to deplete what little, if any, savings they had.<sup>1</sup> Black and Brown communities also are more likely to be unemployed at higher rates than their White counterparts as a result of the pandemic and slower to rebound from those job losses.<sup>2</sup>

The Racial Wealth Divide Initiative (RWDI) at Prosperity Now developed this profile to better understand how racial economic inequality affects the city of Seattle, WA. This profile is also one of the first steps taken under the Building High Impact Nonprofits of Color project, funded by JPMorgan Chase. The project aims to advance best practices and strengthen resources for nonprofits of color to better address racial economic equity.

## **How do I use this data profile?**

The profile presents data on economic inequities in Seattle and its surrounding region. These statistics may seem overwhelming; however, we know with more information about the root causes of racial economic inequality, there is greater opportunity to identify best practices and policies that can address economic challenges facing communities of color.

## **How does Seattle compare with the rest of the nation?**

Seattle is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest region of the US and one of its fastest growing cities.<sup>3</sup> With a population of 708,657, Seattle became ground zero with the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the US. The latest data confirms that this crisis is exacerbating other structural and systemic inequities, causing communities of color to be more vulnerable and at greater risk of exposure to not just COVID-19 but to the social and economic impacts of the crisis. What stands out is that Seattle's median income of \$85,654 is significantly higher than the national median income, which is \$59,611.

While some may point to the large population of White residents (65%) in the city as a contributing factor here, the reality is that the higher-than-average incomes are more attributable to the concentration of technology-anchored companies, industries and jobs (e.g. Amazon, Microsoft, Expedia, T-Mobile) in the area, which has brought an influx of technologists, who are primarily White and who earn six-figure salaries, into Seattle and the surrounding area. As a result, today the median White household income in Seattle (\$96,333) is 1.2-1.5 times higher than that of Asian (\$77,470) and Latinx (\$64,240) residents, and 2-3 times higher than that of Black (\$39,936) and Native American (\$31,519) residents. Overall, racial economic equity in Seattle is better than what we see nationally, except for low homeownership rates, which are tied to the high cost of living.

## **What's next?**

Though we understand that nonprofit intervention is not enough to bridge a racial wealth divide that was created by national, state and local policies and practices, we believe it is important to build the capacity of nonprofits of color, so they can increase their impact in the communities that need them the most. The lack of assets and resources held by nonprofits of color reflect the lack of assets and resources in communities of color as a whole. These gaps and deficiencies have been a good beginning point for JPMorgan Chase and Prosperity Now to raise awareness about the racial wealth divide.

Sincerely,

**Ebony White**

Associate Director, Racial Wealth Divide  
Prosperity Now

**Lillian Singh**

Vice President of Programs and  
Racial Wealth Equity  
Prosperity Now

<sup>1</sup> Guillermo Cantor and Lebaron Sims. "The Unequal Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Households' Financial Stability," April 2020, <https://prosperitynow.org/resources/unequal-impact-covid-19-crisis-households-financial-stability>

<sup>2</sup> "Employment Situation Summary," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 6, 2020, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

<sup>3</sup> "Seattle, Washington Population 2020," World Population Review, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/seattle-wa-population>

The term American Indian/Alaska Native and associated data referenced throughout this brief refers to the Native American community.

# The Racial Wealth Divide in Seattle

## RACIAL ECONOMIC EQUITY OVERVIEW

Economic inequality has expanded over the past months because of the COVID-19 pandemic, shutting the windows of stability and opportunity for millions of Americans. In communities of color, this growing inequality has manifested itself through structural, systemic and institutional factors that are driving health and income inequities for those who were already struggling pre-COVID.

Seattle touts a healthy economy and is one of the fastest growing major cities in the US. But the economic prosperity and wealth that has come from these two points has not been spread out equally. While Seattle has a rich, growing and diverse population and a culture that appears progressive, people and communities of color remain on the margins of the rising economy. When comparing Seattle's White residents to residents of color, we see massive income and wealth gaps, racially disparate unemployment rates and higher rates of cost-burdened renters. As in most major U.S. cities, inequality in Seattle has been ingrained in the economic and social growth since the city's inception.

Seattle has seen boom and bust cycles--lumber industry bust, Klondike Gold Rush boom, World War II industry boom, post-war industry bust, tech and shipping boom--in its economy as industries grew and then fell out of useful commodification. Today, the largest industries in Seattle are professional, scientific and technical services (88,298 people), health care and social assistance (55,880 people) and retail trade (55,338 people).<sup>4</sup> Professional, scientific and technical services also provides the second highest salary rate at \$96,113, right behind the information sector at \$100,701.

Seattle appears to be a prosperous city, and compared to most national economic indicators, households overall in Seattle are faring better, our research shows. However, when you look across racial groups, you can see economic disparities. In fact, while Black households in Seattle earned close to the national median, those dollars circulate far less, given the high cost of housing. To further highlight these disparities, the value of White-owned businesses (\$1,006,920) is two times that of the national rate (\$440,343), while Black businesses are only worth \$81,777, topped by Native American businesses at \$144,762 and Asian American businesses at \$372,280. Despite the considerable size of the Latinx community in Seattle, current Census data does not provide any insights into how much these businesses are worth.

<sup>4</sup>"Seattle, WA," Data USA, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/seattle-wa/>

## SEATTLE HIGHLIGHTS

### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

White residents in Seattle make

**3X**

more than Native American residents

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Black workers in Seattle are

**3X**

more likely to be unemployed than White workers

### COST-BURDENED RENTERS



**2 in 3**

Black and Native American renters are cost-burdened.

### BUSINESS VALUE

The average White-owned business is about

**12X**

the value of the average Black-owned business

### IMMIGRATION: THE FOUNDATION OF SEATTLE'S RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

While Seattle is predominantly White, its immigrant community is diverse and sizable. In fact, according to data from Seattle Public Schools<sup>5</sup>—the largest public school district in Washington—more than 150 languages are spoken by families throughout the district. In terms of size, nearly a fifth (18%) of Seattle's population is made up by immigrants, with Asian immigrants representing the largest group and Latinx and African immigrants trailing. And except for Latinx immigrants, all ethnic groups have higher rates of immigration into Seattle than national rates.

In total, the Asian community in Seattle accounts for about 15% of the population and are the fastest growing ethnic group in the city. Seattle also has a vibrant Somali, Ethiopian and Eritrean community. In the 1970s, the Somali population began as a small group of college students and engineers. Since then, the population has grown as thousands of Somalis came to Seattle and King County as refugees.

Immigrants in Seattle work in a wide array of fields, from the tech industry, to health care, to the service sector.<sup>6</sup> In fact, immigrants play a large role in the booming economy Seattle touts. In 2017, almost nine percent of all immigrants in Seattle were entrepreneurs (about 54,318 people), making them about 36.8% more likely to be entrepreneurs than U.S.-born citizens.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, immigrants in Seattle occupy an interesting position in the labor force: they tend to be more represented in populations with college degrees, compared to their U.S.-born counterparts, but they are also highly represented in communities with less than a high school education.

Fueled by an immigration system that favors highly educated and marketable immigrants—many have jobs waiting for them in the area's dominant sectors—this duality has not only led these communities to fill job vacancies on both ends of the skills spectrum,<sup>8</sup> but it also perpetuates the harmful “model minority” myth. While this misconception is harmful to all communities of color—particularly those born in the US, it is particularly so for low-income Asian communities, whose different social and economic circumstances are often overlooked because of aggregated data that paints the community as homogenous and universally successful.



Seattle, WA - April 17th, 2020: Two people wearing face masks while shopping at a market during the Covid-19 stay-at-home emergency.

<sup>5</sup> Seattle Public Schools - Honoring Home Languages, [https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/english\\_language\\_learners/honoring\\_home\\_languages](https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/english_language_learners/honoring_home_languages)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> "Immigrants and the economy in: Seattle Metro Area," New American Economy, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/city/seattle/>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

# RACIAL WEALTH DIVIDE IN SEATTLE, WA

Fueled by rising housing costs, Seattle/King County has the third highest rate of people experiencing homelessness in the country, ranked after New York and Los Angeles.<sup>9</sup> While Washington state has seen an overall eight percent decrease in homelessness, Seattle's homeless population has increased by 24%. The percent of unsheltered homelessness and chronic homelessness have both increased significantly, by 135% and 118%, respectively.<sup>10</sup> Though people of color make up only about 40% of Seattle/King County's population, they are overrepresented in its homeless population, with 32% identifying as Black, 15% identifying as Latinx, 10% identifying as Native American, four percent Asian American and three percent Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native. In a recent survey on reasons for homelessness, 24% cited a loss of job/income.<sup>11</sup> The majority of the respondents noted that the most effective tools to mitigate homelessness would be more affordable housing and rental assistance.

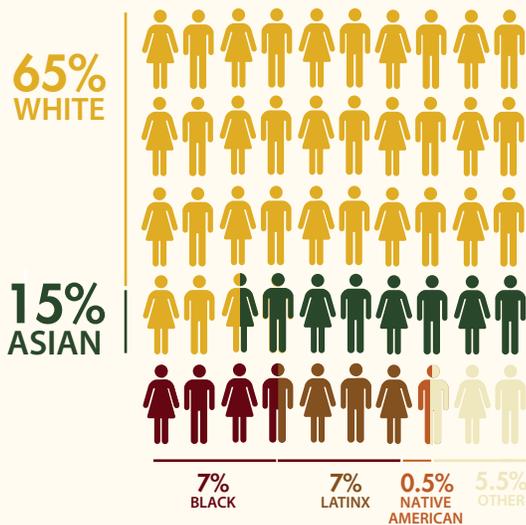
## HOUSEHOLDS OF COLOR IN LIQUID ASSET POVERTY...



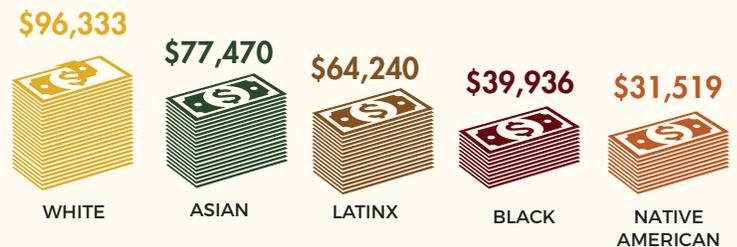
**41%**

(PROSPERITY NOW SCORECARD DATA)

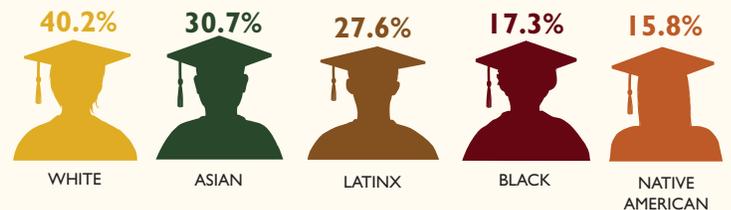
### POPULATION



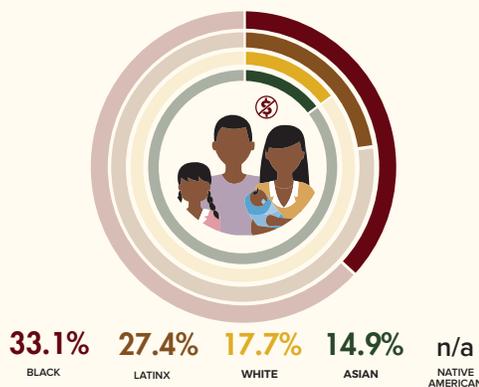
### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



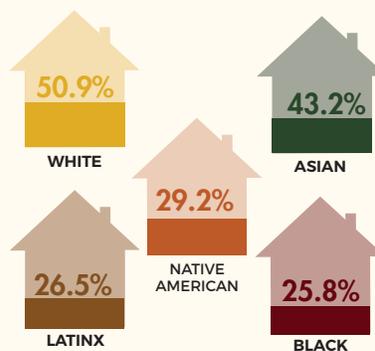
### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



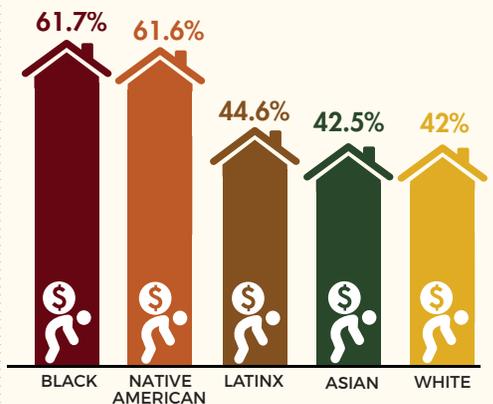
### HOUSEHOLD WITH ZERO NET WORTH



### HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE



### COST-BURDENED RENTERS



<sup>9</sup>Niall McCarthy, "The American Cities With The Highest Homeless Populations In 2019 [Infographic]," Forbes, January 14, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2020/01/14/the-american-cities-with-the-highest-homeless-populations-in-2019-infographic/?sh=3832a61114a9>

<sup>10</sup>"State of Homelessness: State and CoC Dashboards - Washington," National Alliance to End Homelessness, <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-dashboards/?State=Washington>

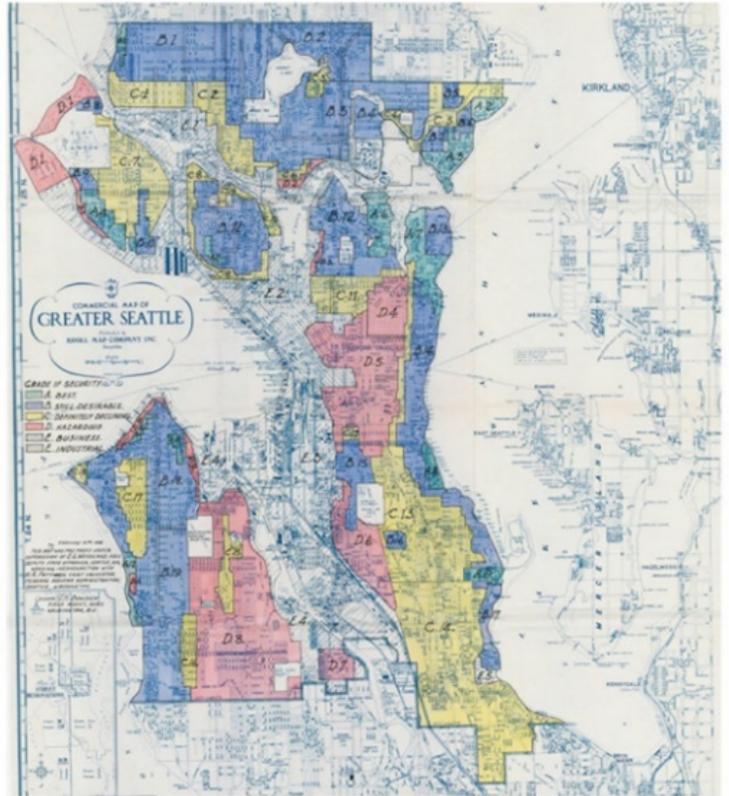
<sup>11</sup>Donna Andrews, Zachary DeWolf, Et al., "Seattle/King County Point-in-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness - 2019," [https://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-Report\\_KingCounty\\_FINAL.pdf](https://allhomekc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019-Report_KingCounty_FINAL.pdf)

## RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION IN SEATTLE

Like most cities in the US, Seattle has a long history of racial discrimination and residential segregation, fostered in large measure by generations of homeownership and housing issues, actions and policies that date to the early 20th century.

### Redlining Shaped Seattle's Neighborhoods

At the highest level, the city's history of racial discrimination and residential segregation can be traced to New Deal programs of the 1930s. Developed at the time to address growing foreclosures and economic calamity stemming from the Great Depression, those programs would go on to create mortgage insurance and guarantees, along with other reforms, to entice banks to begin lending again.<sup>12</sup> But those insurances and guarantees were centered on a series of community assessments—tracked on maps that were color-coded from green to red, and labeled from “best” to “hazardous”—that were used by banks and other housing professionals to deem communities safe to lend and worthy of investments.



"Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America," Seattle Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) "Residential Security" Map of Seattle (January 1936).

As with many other cities, the neighborhoods in Seattle that were deemed the “best” or “good” communities—noted in green or blue on these community assessment maps—were places like Queen Anne Hill, where mostly affluent and White households lived. Those noted in red and deemed “hazardous” were places where communities of color and Jewish communities were more likely to be living. These redlining maps and the lending discrimination that stemmed from them would go on to be enforced by racially-restrictive covenants that prohibited homeowners from selling or renting their homes to people of color—in particular, Black residents.

Today, researchers at the University of Washington's Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project have found more than 500 racially-restrictive deeds and covenants, including 87 in Seattle at the King County Recorder's Office and County Archives.<sup>13</sup> They estimate these restrictive deeds and covenants cover more than 20,000 properties in Seattle and the surrounding areas.<sup>14</sup> The result of such expansive discrimination denied countless communities of color in Seattle the ability to own a home—the largest wealth-generating

<sup>12</sup> "The History of Redlining in Seattle," KCTS9, YouTube, November 20, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBQE5rrWdFA&ab\\_channel=KCTS9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBQE5rrWdFA&ab_channel=KCTS9)

<sup>13</sup> "Racial Restrictive Covenants: Neighborhood by neighborhood restrictions across King County," The Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, University of Washington, <https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

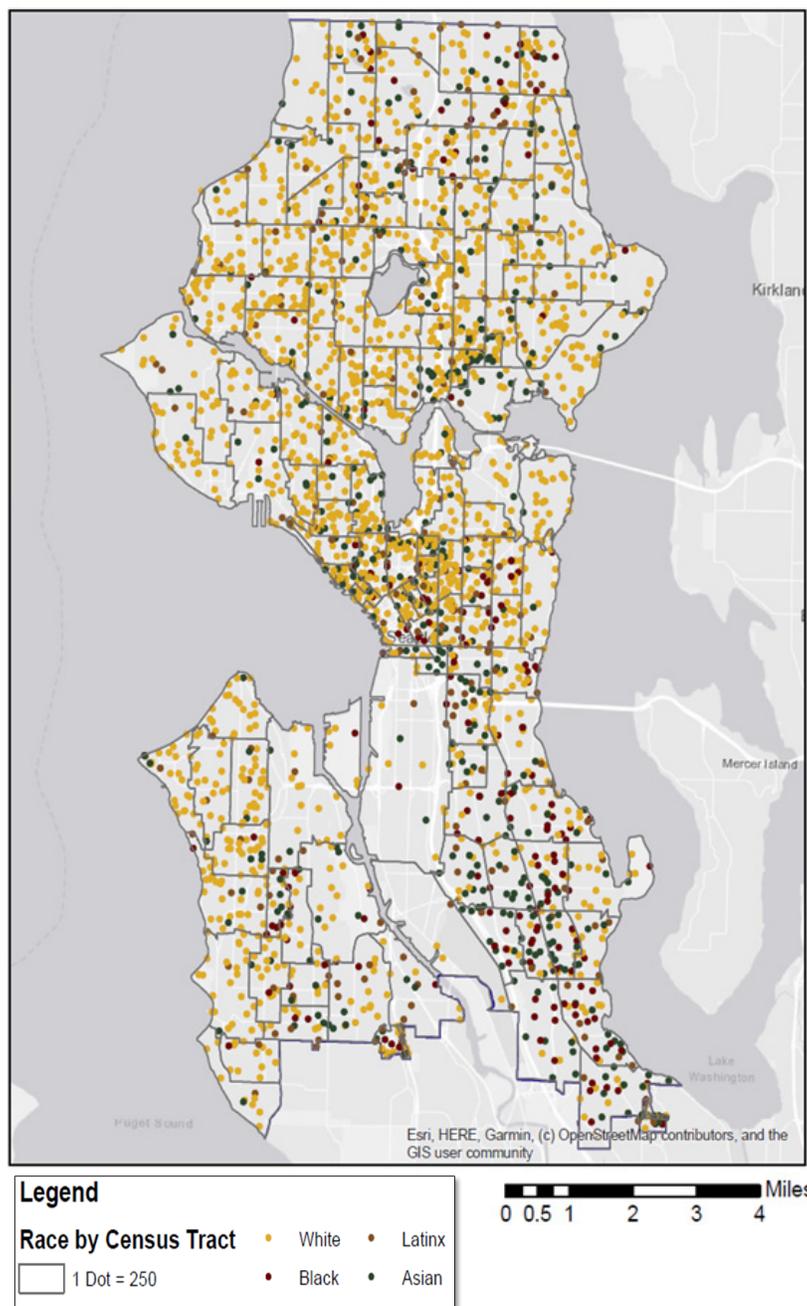
asset for most households. This unfortunate reality can be seen in the wide gap in homeownership between communities of color and White households, where less than 45% of Asian, Latinx, Black and Native American residents are homeowners today. By contrast, nearly 51% of White residents are homeowners in Seattle. Ultimately, these actions blocked many people of color from building wealth. They also led to neighborhoods like the International District and the Central District, and other neighborhoods south of Seattle, to become cultural hubs for Black, Asian and other communities of color in Seattle.

### The Legacy of Redlining Eventually Gave Way to Rampant Neighborhood Gentrification

On April 11, 1968—in the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—President Johnson signed the Fair Housing Act, which made racial housing discrimination illegal. Eight days later, on April 19, 1968, the Seattle City Council unanimously passed an open housing ordinance, which prohibited unfair housing practices.<sup>15</sup> While necessary and noteworthy then and since their passage, these pieces of legislation came after 30 years of intentional credit and investment discrimination that left “hazardous” neighborhoods at such disadvantage compared to their more prosperous neighbors that today, about 75% of redlined neighborhoods continue to face economic challenges.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, because of decades of disinvestment and depressed home values, these redlined

neighborhoods—64% of which are minority communities—became more vulnerable to gentrification and displacement pressures as new, younger and more affluent buyers could more easily afford homes there. Gentrification eventually raised the cost of living in these communities and forced marginalized communities to be pushed out.

### SEATTLE, WA RACIAL HOUSEHOLD BREAKDOWN BY CENSUS TRACT 2018



<sup>15</sup> Anne Frantilla, "Housing Segregation and Open Housing Legislation," Seattle Municipal Archives, Office of the City Clerk, City of Seattle, <https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/digital-document-libraries/the-seattle-open-housing-campaign/open-housing-narrative>

<sup>16</sup> Bruce Mitchell PhD., and Juan Franco, "HOLC "Redlining" Maps: The Persistent Structure Of Segregation And Economic Inequality," March 20, 2018, <https://nrc.org/holc/>

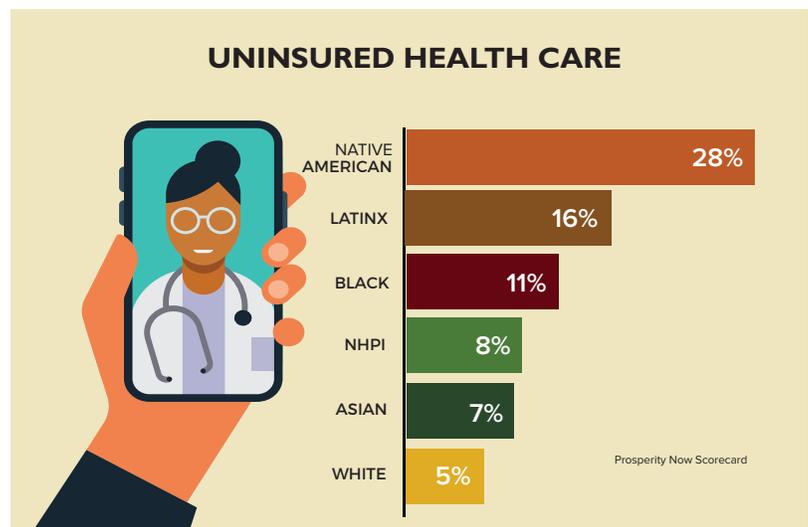
In Seattle—which is considered to be the third most gentrifying city in the nation<sup>17</sup>—the forces of gentrification can be seen in the neighborhoods like the once historically Black Central District, which since the 1970s has seen its Black population decline from about 75% to 15%,<sup>18</sup> and now is majority White. Many long-time Black residents of the Central District found refuge there from the housing discrimination that marred other parts of Seattle. The influx of investment and economic activity has led to rising property values and property taxes that have created challenges,<sup>19</sup> becoming key drivers for communities of color to sell their homes.

### Rising Housing Costs Add Fuel to Seattle’s History of Redlining, Creating Community Displacement

Beyond the challenges and outcomes that have grown from Seattle’s history of redlining, the influx of economic activity that has come from Seattle’s tech economy has also created ripple effects that have had other severe consequences throughout the city. For example, a person would have to earn \$33.48 an hour to afford a modest, two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in King County (\$2,099).<sup>20</sup> It should come as no surprise that such high rental costs have not only led almost 45% of all renters in Seattle to spend 30% or more of their income on rent, it’s also strongly correlated with the city’s rise in homelessness<sup>21</sup>—an unfortunate reality that communities of color in the Seattle metro are far more likely to be experiencing.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, over the past three decades, Seattle’s high housing costs have served to push communities of color to live farther away from the city.

### PUBLIC HEALTH AND COVID-19

Health, wealth, place and race are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing indicators. Public health officials point to longstanding disparities in health care, housing, social services, as well as other socioeconomic indicators that greatly impact the health outcomes of individuals and communities. For example, in Seattle, households of color are twice as likely to go without health insurance as White residents: 11% of Blacks are uninsured, seven percent of Asians, 16% of Hispanics, 27% of Native Americans and eight percent of NHPI, compared to five



<sup>17</sup> Gene Balk, "Seattle is the third most gentrifying U.S. city — but that might not be as bad as you think, study finds," *The Seattle Times*, July 24, 2019, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/seattle-ranks-near-top-for-gentrification-but-that-might-not-be-as-bad-as-you-think-study-finds/>

<sup>18</sup> Gene Balk, "Percentage of Black residents in Seattle is at its lowest point in 50 years," *The Seattle Times*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/percentage-of-blacks-living-in-seattle-at-lowest-point-in-50-years/>

<sup>19</sup> Naomi Ishisaka, "Inye Wokoma's Last Stand: One Man's Fight To Save Seattle's Central District," *Seattle Magazine*, April 2018, <https://www.seattlemag.com/news-and-features/inye-wokomas-last-stand-one-mans-fight-save-seattles-central-district>

<sup>20</sup> "Out of Reach 2020: Washington," National Low Income Housing Coalition, <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/washington>

<sup>21</sup> Maggie Stringfellow and Dilip Wagle, "The economics of homelessness in Seattle and King County," May 18, 2018, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-cities/the-economics-of-homelessness-in-seattle-and-king-county>

<sup>22</sup> Sydney Brownstone, "COVID-19 forced King County to change its homelessness system. And almost by accident, housing referrals for Black people are going up," August 3, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/author/sydney-brownstone/page/3/>

percent of Whites.<sup>23</sup> Examining life expectancy in the Seattle area down to neighborhood census tracts shows alarming racial disparities: There is a 6-10-year difference in life expectancy between places like NE Seattle, a primarily White, upper middle-income neighborhood, and vast parts of West and South Seattle and King County.<sup>24</sup> These numbers reinforce the idea that the life expectancy gap between races could be attributed to socioeconomic and geographic factors. An added component to highlight is the number of U.S.-born residents with health insurance, at about 95%, compared to foreign-born residents; 89% of them are uninsured.<sup>25</sup>

What the COVID-19 crisis has underscored in Seattle and across the nation is that people of color are at a higher risk of contracting and dying, not only from COVID-19, but also from other preexisting conditions. Preliminary research in King County shows that Hispanic residents are four times more likely to contract the virus, and 2.5 times more likely than White residents to die as a result. These numbers are equally alarming for Black residents and NHPI, with Black cases being twice as high as White cases, and NHPI contracting the virus at four times the rate of White residents.<sup>26</sup> Studies show that there are multiple forces behind these disparities, including the fact that people of color are disproportionately represented among essential workers who cannot perform their jobs while sheltering at home, they're more likely to live in multigenerational households that can increase the risk of exposure to the coronavirus, and they lack access to quality health care.<sup>27</sup>

## A CITY OF OPPORTUNITIES

Before COVID-19, Seattle topped many rankings as one of the best economies in the US. However, the data tells us that all residents did not benefit from that booming economy. Many would argue that the growing economy, while providing more job opportunities, also raised the cost of living and pushed many residents of color out of their homes. The recent pandemic only exacerbated these challenges, and its long-term impact is uncertain. However, Seattle has an opportunity to develop and implement policies and practices where everyone has access to the tools, resources and support needed for their residents to live a prosperous life post-COVID. In a recent report on State Policy Priorities, Prosperity Now underscored that the pandemic-related emergency policies enacted by states should not only remain in place until this crisis is over but offers recommendations to leaders and policymakers on how to utilize this momentum and consider policies that will help families to have a means to save, access to affordable housing, and protection from predatory traps, to name a few.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, the organizations participating in the Building High Impact for Nonprofits of Color are on the frontlines responding to the immediate needs of their communities' head on. They are diverse across their services to address the complex problems that exist, providing rental assistance to small business support to pro bono legal aid. Through their participation in this program, they will be positioned to lead on solutions and emerging best practices that will be grounded in the racial disparities discussed in this report.

<sup>23</sup> "2018-2019 King County Community Health Needs Assessment," King County Hospitals for a Healthier Community, <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/data/community-health-indicators/~media/depts/health/data/documents/2018-2019-Joint-CHNA-Report.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

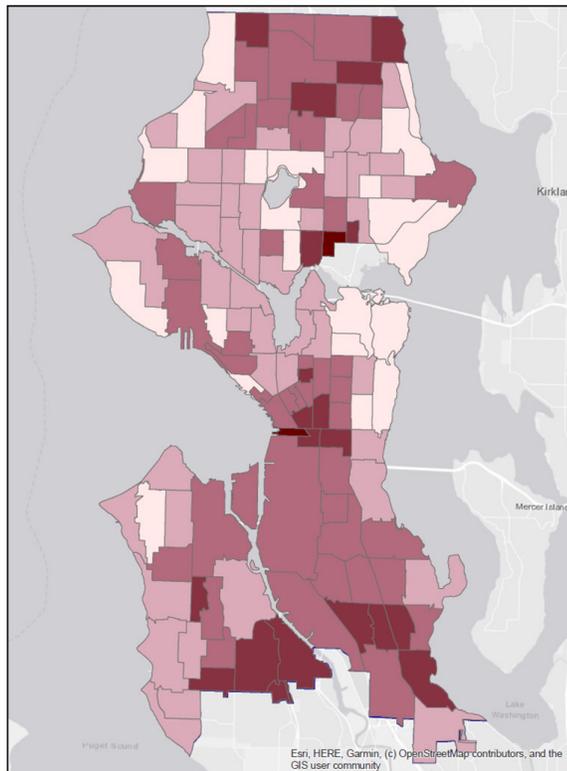
<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis Kamb, "King County has big racial disparities in coronavirus cases and deaths, according to public-health data," May 1, 2020, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/king-county-has-big-racial-disparities-in-coronavirus-cases-and-deaths-according-to-public-health-data/>

<sup>27</sup> Maria Godoy, "Racial Inequality May Be As Deadly As COVID-19," Analysis Finds," August 27, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/08/27/906002043/racial-inequality-may-be-as-deadly-as-covid-19-analysis-finds>

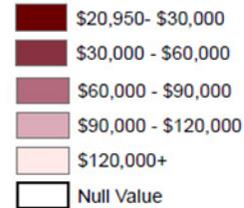
<sup>28</sup> Prosperity Now's 2021 State Policy Priorities. [https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Policy/Prosperity\\_Now\\_2021\\_State\\_Policy\\_Priorities.pdf](https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Policy/Prosperity_Now_2021_State_Policy_Priorities.pdf)

## SEATTLE, WA MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY CENSUS TRACT 2018



### LEGEND

#### Median Household Income by Census Tract



Source: American Community Survey 2018  
5 year data



## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Data Measure	Seattle	King County	Seattle MSA	Washington	United States
<b>Total Population</b>	708,657	2,163,257	3,809,717	7,294,336	322,903,030
White	457,421	1,307,511	2,439,815	5,039,208	197,181,177
Black or African American	48,479	132,775	209,847	259,482	39,715,917
Asian	105,773	368,796	502,498	602,020	17,367,169
Hispanic or Latinx	46,623	206,735	377,054	911,573	57,517,935
American Indian or Alaska Native	3,661	11,219	26,332	80,274	2,135,479
<b>Total Households</b>	323,409	865,627	1,473,063	2,800,423	119,730,128
White	226,392	585,995	1,046,901	2,135,340	81,417,177
Black or African American	19,039	49,703	80,167	97,357	14,683,705
Asian	25,491	132,778	175,448	208,088	5,566,667
Hispanic or Latinx	16,997	58,587	100,729	234,406	15,521,078
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,580	5,010	10,807	31,955	869,951
<b>U.S. Citizenship Rate</b>	90.7%	88.2%	90.8%	92.6%	93.1%
White	96.9%	96.7%	97.5%	98.2%	98.5%
Black or African American	89.9%	90.7%	91.9%	92.6%	96.7%
Asian	68.6%	65.8%	68.8%	70.3%	71.1%
Hispanic or Latinx	77.6%	64.3%	67.2%	66.2%	74.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	99.1%	99.7%	99.6%	99.4%	99.4%
<b>Speak English Less Than "Very Well"</b>	8.0%	10.5%	8.9%	7.6%	8.5%
White	1.0%	2.4%	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%
Black or African American	15.3%	13.2%	10.7%	9.6%	3.1%
Asian	31.1%	31.8%	32.3%	31.7%	33.2%
Hispanic or Latinx	21.2%	27.8%	25.3%	28.2%	30.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.7%	3.0%	2.2%	3.5%	7.5%

"-" indicates that no data is available

**HOUSEHOLD FINANCES**

Data Measure	Seattle	King County	Seattle MSA	Washington	United States
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$85,654	\$88,870	\$81,831	\$70,005	\$59,611
White	\$96,333	\$95,945	\$86,456	\$72,907	\$65,851
Black or African American	\$39,936	\$48,629	\$51,392	\$50,704	\$40,065
Asian	\$77,470	\$102,728	\$95,512	\$88,565	\$84,156
Hispanic or Latinx	\$64,240	\$62,420	\$61,152	\$52,717	\$46,602
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$31,519	\$46,602	\$52,401	\$45,337	\$40,727
<b>Income Poverty Rate</b>	11.0%	9.1%	9.2%	11.1%	14.0%
White	7.6%	6.6%	7.2%	9.5%	10.3%
Black or African American	27.2%	21.3%	18.4%	18.9%	23.9%
Asian	17.3%	10.9%	11.0%	11.3%	12.7%
Hispanic or Latinx	15.1%	15.1%	15.5%	18.8%	22.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	32.3%	23.0%	-	23.1%	26.0%
<b>Asset Poverty Rate</b>	25.3%	21.9%	22.1%	21.5%	24.1%
White	22.3%	18.6%	19.2%	18.7%	18.5%
Black or African American	49.9%	46.8%	44.7%	-	41.8%
Asian	23.5%	17.8%	17.4%	-	16.7%
Hispanic or Latinx	40.7%	42.4%	41.2%	-	35.4%
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Liquid Asset Poverty Rate</b>	26.6%	26.8%	28.8%	26.7%	36.9%
White	21.3%	21.3%	23.9%	22.4%	29.1%
Black or African American	59.5%	56.4%	54.7%	24.9%	58.2%
Asian	31.1%	25.6%	27.1%	12.1%	23.9%
Hispanic or Latinx	44.2%	53.3%	54.2%	52.0%	58.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Households with Zero Net Worth</b>	19.0%	15.8%	15.6%	15.8%	15.7%
White	17.7%	14.1%	14.0%	13.5%	12.7%
Black or African American	33.1%	31.5%	30.3%	42.4%	28.7%
Asian	14.9%	11.4%	10.8%	7.2%	7.9%
Hispanic or Latinx	27.4%	26.7%	25.7%	20.3%	20.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	-	-	-	-

**EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS OWNERSHIP**

Data Measure	Seattle	King County	Seattle MSA	Washington	United States
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	73.0%	69.9%	68.0%	64.1%	63.2%
White	71.0%	65.6%	63.7%	58.9%	58.0%
Black or African American	62.1%	67.6%	67.5%	65.9%	60.1%
Asian	64.3%	65.9%	65.0%	64.1%	62.2%
Hispanic or Latinx	78.7%	74.9%	72.5%	70.0%	65.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	54.3%	58.9%	57.8%	54.5%	55.9%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%	2.8%	3.1%
White	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%
Black or African American	8.6%	-	5.4%	5.1%	5.3%
Asian	5.3%	0.9%	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%
Hispanic or Latinx	5.6%	5.6%	5.8%	3.8%	3.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	-	-	-	5.8%	5.0%
<b>Businesses Without Paid Employees</b>	74.5%	74.7%	74.9%	74.8%	80.4%
White	76.8%	76.2%	76.2%	76.1%	79.4%
Black or African American	93.2%	93.2%	92.2%	91.6%	95.8%
Asian	70.1%	71.6%	71.4%	70.0%	74.9%
Hispanic or Latinx	84.4%	18.5%	84.9%	84.0%	91.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	88.1%	85.0%	86.3%	86.4%	90.4%
<b>Business Value</b>	\$893,559	\$700,437	\$605,793	\$519,590	\$440,343
White	\$1,006,920	\$791,434	\$672,572	\$552,652	\$508,406
Black or African American	\$81,777	\$87,379	\$83,979	\$86,838	\$58,119
Asian	\$372,280	\$382,509	\$357,676	\$372,171	\$364,717
Hispanic or Latinx	-	-	-	\$1,410,167	\$143,271
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$144,762	\$138,517	\$138,293	\$159,042	\$142,306

"-" indicates that no data is available

## HOUSING AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

Data Measure	Seattle	King County	Seattle MSA	Washington	United States
<b>Homeownership Rate</b>	46.1%	57.1%	60.0%	62.7%	63.8%
White	50.9%	62.7%	65.3%	67.3%	71.8%
Black or African American	25.8%	29.1%	31.7%	32.3%	41.8%
Asian	43.2%	58.1%	60.6%	61.2%	59.0%
Hispanic or Latinx	26.5%	34.3%	37.9%	43.6%	46.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	29.2%	38.9%	46.5%	51.7%	54.0%
<b>Median Property Value</b>	\$587,000	\$480,000	\$390,000	\$300,000	\$200,000
White	\$600,000	\$500,000	\$395,000	\$300,000	\$200,000
Black or African American	\$435,000	\$400,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$140,000
Asian	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$450,000	\$415,000	\$400,000
Hispanic or Latinx	\$450,000	\$350,000	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$170,000
American Indian or Alaska Native	\$400,000	\$300,000	\$265,000	\$170,000	\$110,000
<b>Cost-burdened Renters</b>	44.1%	45.5%	47.4%	48.5%	50.5%
White	42.0%	43.1%	45.4%	47.6%	46.3%
Black or African American	61.7%	61.1%	59.5%	59.5%	57.4%
Asian	42.5%	39.1%	41.8%	42.7%	45.1%
Hispanic or Latinx	44.6%	51.4%	53.6%	50.8%	56.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	61.6%	58.1%	53.6%	51.1%	49.3%
<b>Cost-burdened Owners</b>	28.6%	29.6%	29.8%	29.8%	28.9%
White	26.1%	27.8%	28.4%	28.8%	26.1%
Black or African American	49.1%	38.3%	37.1%	35.7%	37.7%
Asian	34.7%	34.2%	34.3%	34.4%	35.3%
Hispanic or Latinx	38.9%	36.4%	35.7%	34.3%	38.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	39.1%	36.2%	40.8%	34.3%	30.9%

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Data Measure	Seattle	King County	Seattle MSA	Washington	United States
<b>High School Degree or Higher</b>	94.6%	93.0%	92.5%	91.1%	87.7%
White	98.0%	96.9%	95.7%	94.7%	92.6%
Black or African American	86.0%	87.8%	89.1%	89.2%	85.4%
Asian	87.2%	89.1%	88.5%	88.1%	86.8%
Hispanic or Latinx	82.0%	71.6%	72.4%	65.3%	67.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	84.8%	81.8%	84.2%	83.3%	80.0%
<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	36.4%	30.9%	26.1%	22.0%	19.4%
White	40.2%	33.8%	27.6%	23.1%	21.6%
Black or African American	17.3%	17.5%	16.3%	15.8%	13.1%
Asian	30.7%	31.6%	30.7%	29.8%	30.3%
Hispanic or Latinx	27.6%	17.0%	14.3%	10.5%	11.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	15.8%	11.3%	10.0%	9.0%	10.0%
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	26.2%	20.1%	15.6%	13.0%	12.0%
White	29.1%	20.9%	15.9%	13.4%	13.5%
Black or African American	9.5%	9.3%	8.7%	9.0%	7.9%
Asian	27.5%	27.3%	23.7%	22.4%	23.3%
Hispanic or Latinx	14.4%	8.4%	6.7%	4.9%	5.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	5.7%	3.6%	3.9%	4.0%	5.2%

## DATA MEASURES & SOURCES

Data Measure	Measure Description	Source	
<b>Population Demographics</b>	<b>Total Households</b>	Total number of households	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B1101
	<b>Total Population</b>	Total population	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; DP05
	<b>U.S. Citizenship Rate</b>	Percentage of population that are U.S. citizens	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B05001 & Microdata (5-year)
	<b>Speak English Less Than "Very Well"</b>	Percentage of population that speaks English less than "very well"	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B16005
	<b>Median Household Income</b>	Median household income in the past 12 months	PN Analysis of ACS Five-year Microdata
<b>Household Finances</b>	<b>Income Poverty Rate</b>	Percentage of all families with income in the past 12 months below the federal poverty threshold	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B17017
	<b>Asset Poverty Rate</b>	Percentage of households without sufficient net worth to subsist at the poverty level for three months in the absence of income—\$6,275 for a family of four in 2018—if they experience a sudden job loss, a medical emergency or another financial crisis leading to a loss of stable income	SIPP, 2016
	<b>Liquid Asset Poverty Rate</b>	Percentage of households without sufficient liquid assets to subsist at the poverty level for three months in the absence of income—\$6,275 for a family of four in 2018—if they experience a sudden job loss, a medical emergency or another financial crisis leading to a loss of stable income	SIPP, 2016
	<b>Households with Zero Net Worth</b>	Percentage of households with zero or negative net worth	SIPP, 2016
	<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	Percentage of civilian labor force who are employed or unemployed but actively searching for employment	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B23025, C23002B-1
<b>Employment &amp; Business Ownership</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	Percentage of civilian labor force who are unemployed but actively searching for employment	ACS 2018: One-year Estimate; B23025
	<b>Businesses Without Paid Employees</b>	Percentage of total businesses that do not employ paid workers	2012 Survey of Business Owners
	<b>Business Value</b>	Average sales or receipts earned per firm	2012 Survey of Business Owners
	<b>Homeownership Rate</b>	Percentage of occupied housing units that are owner occupied	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B25003
<b>Housing &amp; Homeownership</b>	<b>Median Property Value</b>	Median value, in 2014 dollars, of owner-occupied housing units.	PN Analysis of ACS Five-year Microdata
	<b>Cost-burdened Renters</b>	Percentage of renter-occupied units spending 30% or more of household income on rent and utilities	PN Analysis of ACS Five-year Microdata
	<b>Cost-burdened Owners</b>	Percentage of mortgaged owners spending 30% or more of household income on selected monthly owner costs	PN Analysis of ACS Five-year Microdata
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>High School Degree or Higher</b>	Percentage of population 25 and older who have a high school degree, GED or alternative degree only	ACS 2018: Five-year Estimates; B15002, C15002A-1
	<b>Bachelor's Degree</b>	Percentage of population 25 and older who have a bachelor's (4-year college) degree	PN Analysis of ACS Five-year Microdata
	<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	Percentage of population 25 and older who have a graduate or professional degree	PN Analysis of ACS Five-year Microdata

### **BUILDING HIGH IMPACT NONPROFITS OF COLOR PROJECT**

Since 2015, Prosperity Now's Racial Wealth Divide Initiative (RWDI) has worked to build a national network of leaders of color, collaborating with local nonprofits to strengthen their capability and access to resources. RWDI leverages its connection to national organizations, a growing network of state and local partners and core competencies—technical assistance, policy development and advocacy and applied research—to aggressively address racial economic inequality.

Building High-Impact Nonprofits of Color organizations are in eight cities: New Orleans, Baltimore, Chicago, Miami, Dallas and Wilmington, DE, as well as Minneapolis and Seattle, which were launched/added in 2020. This project will equip more organizations with strategies and skills to start, expand or improve wealth-building initiatives for communities of color across the country. Prosperity Now's RWDI will continue partnering with organizations to support their growth and development, share Prosperity Now resources and analysis and advance the development of best practices for addressing racial economic inequality at the local level.

Below are the five nonprofit organizations of color that the RWDI is working with in Seattle. Each one is helping bridge the racial wealth divide and promote economic mobility and prosperity in their communities. Despite the widening racial wealth divide, these organizations and others like them are developing, piloting, managing and replicating programs and best practices to address the inequities in Seattle and the nation.

### **BUILDING HIGH IMPACT NONPROFITS OF COLOR IN SEATTLE, WA**



#### **AFRICATOWN COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (<https://www.africatownlandtrust.org/>)**

The mission of Africatown Community Land Trust Mission is to acquire, develop and steward land in Greater Seattle to empower and preserve the Black Diaspora community. Africatown Community Land Trust is working for community ownership of land in the Central District that can support the cultural and economic thriving of people who are part of the African diaspora in the Greater Seattle region. Africatown Community Land Trust was formed to acquire, steward and develop land assets that are necessary for the Black/African diaspora community to grow and thrive in place in the Central District as well as support other individuals and organizations in retention and development of land.



#### **COMMUNITIES RISE (<https://communities-rise.org/>)**

Communities Rise fosters movements to build power in communities impacted by systemic oppression. To create an equitable system, we pursue cross-sector collaboration and provide capacity building and legal services for community organizations and microenterprises. Communities Rise works with organizations and microenterprises in communities impacted by systemic oppression to increase capacity and build power. We recognize the strength and resilience in our communities and offer support through peer learning, coaching and legal services and trainings. We also work with community leaders in the broader nonprofit, public and philanthropic sectors to create systemic change.



**URBAN IMPACT (<https://www.urbanimpactseattle.org/>)**

Urban Impact’s mission is to partner with families and communities to break the cycle of social, material and spiritual poverty. Urban Impact was built on the principles of Christian Community Development and a unique relationship with two neighborhood churches, Emerald City Bible Fellowship and Rainier Avenue Church. Focused on strengthening families and raising leaders, Urban Impact partners with people in the neighborhood to address issues surrounding education, youth development, family, health, economic stability and racial reconciliation. Generational poverty has social, material and spiritual implications. Breaking it requires a holistic approach that addresses both the personal and systemic challenges of poverty.



Urban League of  
Metropolitan Seattle

**URBAN LEAGUE OF METROPOLITAN SEATTLE (<https://urbanleague.org/>)**

The Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (ULMS) empowers African Americans, as well as other diverse underserved communities, to thrive by securing educational and economic opportunities. As the second-oldest civil rights organization in the state of Washington, ULMS is one of the region’s essential economic first responders, helping families cope with challenges through a variety of programs designed to support and encourage self-sufficiency in all aspects of life. ULMS also serves as a liaison between community members, local businesses, city and county government and other service-based organizations that share our concern for the welfare of the Black community and other disadvantaged residents in the Greater Puget Sound area.



White Center  
Community  
Development  
Association

CONNECTING PEOPLE & PLACE  
TO BUILD COMMUNITY

**WHITE CENTER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**

**(<https://www.wccda.org/>)**

The White Center CDA works to eradicate poverty and build a vibrant, economically diverse community. We do this by facilitating a community-driven agenda for change; connecting families and community members to resources, services, and supports; advocating for inclusion, engagement and resident leadership; working across communities, cultures and systems. The WCCDA is committed to ensuring long-term equity and social justice through systems change for the benefit of the White Center community.

## RACIAL WEALTH DIVIDE PARTNERS IN SEATTLE, WA

**Prosperity Now** believes that everyone deserves a chance to prosper. Since 1979, we have helped millions of people, especially people of color and those of limited incomes, to achieve financial security, stability and, ultimately, prosperity. We offer a unique combination of practical solutions, in-depth research and proven strategies, all aimed at building wealth for those who need it most. We recognize the devastating impact of the racial wealth divide on people and our economy, and we strive to equip organizations of color and others with the capacity, tools and cultural competency necessary to address structural and systemic barriers facing families of color. **Gary Cunningham** is our President and CEO.

**Racial Wealth Divide Initiative (RWDI) at Prosperity Now** works to strengthen the ability of all Prosperity Now's programs to proactively address racial wealth inequality and deepen the analysis of asset poverty challenges impacting communities of color. RWDI launches and implements projects that highlight best practices for eradicating racial wealth inequality, including collaborating with local and regional organizations. RWDI supports the efforts of Prosperity Now and its partners to drive policy solutions that reduce racial economic inequality at the national, state and local levels.

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