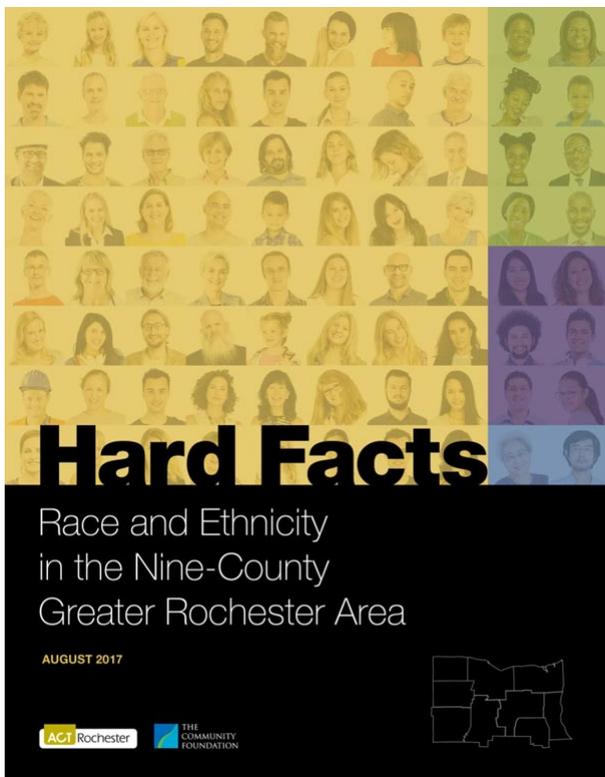


Fostering Racial and Ethnic Understanding



Grant in Action: Hard Facts Report

Rochester Area Community Foundation and ACT Rochester released a report in August 2017 that documents how the status of African Americans and Latinos in the entire nine-county Rochester region significantly lags their counterparts in New York State and nationwide.

“Hard Facts: Race and Ethnicity in the Nine-County Greater Rochester Area” examines the substantial gaps in educational and economic outcomes among persons of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, based on data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2011-2015) and the New York State Department of Education student assessments for 2016.

The report shows that the gaps are wide, and individuals and families are affected throughout their lives and for generations to come. For example:

- African American children in our region are more than four times as likely as whites to live in poverty, and Latino children experience poverty at a rate of more than three-and-a-half times that of non-Latino white children.
- Dramatic academic achievement gaps among racial and ethnic groups are evident at every grade level.
- Median household incomes of African Americans in our region are less than half that of whites. For Latinos, salaries are only slightly more than half the level of non-Latino whites.
- Both African Americans and Latinos are less than half as likely to own their homes as their white counterparts.

“Unfortunately, these statistics have a demonstrable impact on the well-being of our neighbors in urban, suburban and rural areas, which contributes significantly to our low median incomes and higher poverty,” says Ann Johnson, senior director of ACT Rochester.

According to the report, researched and written by Ed Doherty, author of three previous reports on poverty, if local African American and Latino poverty rates mirrored the rates of these same groups in New York State as a whole, our region’s poverty rate would be considerably lower. For the city of Rochester, the poverty rate would be nearly seven percentage points lower. Instead of its current rank as the fourth poorest city in the nation, Rochester would rank about 17th.

Johnson pointed to two other findings in the report that impede improving the quality of life in our community:

- The disparities negatively impact one of the largest sources of intergenerational wealth transfer – home ownership.
- The gaps between racial and ethnic groups are greater in the Rochester region than in the United States or New York State as a whole. This is not a city-suburb

comparison. The nine-county area includes four cities, expansive suburban areas, numerous villages, and significant rural areas. Data on race and ethnicity for the nine counties (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates) has been available on the ACT Rochester website since its launch in 2009. Since 2012, ACT Rochester has tracked and reported most of this data in tabular form.

“For the health of our region and its workforce, we cannot ignore these findings,” says Jennifer Leonard, president and CEO of the Community Foundation. “We must face the fact that our region – once home to Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony – has systematically failed people based on their skin color or ethnicity. As we did with the poverty reports, ACT Rochester and the Community Foundation are urging awareness and action to address these deep disparities.”

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