

**Positive Trends and Potential Challenges for
African Americans in Indianapolis**

Prepared for the Indianapolis African American Quality of Life Initiative

March 6, 2023

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Introduction

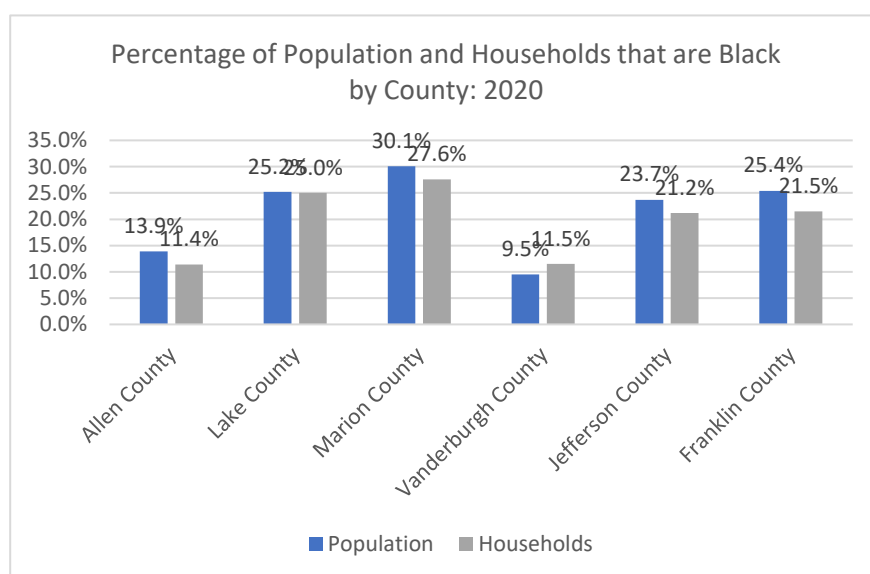
The Indianapolis African American Quality of Life Initiative (IAAQLI) is a partnership between the [National Urban League](#), the [Indianapolis Urban League](#), and the [African American Coalition of Indianapolis](#). IAAQLI is a place-based community change project with the goal to increase the quality-of-life of African American residents in Indianapolis. This research brief explores available data and research for Indianapolis' Black community aligned to IAAQLI's goals. The aim of this document is to gain a deeper understanding of current data trends positively impacting the quality of life for Black residents in Marion County, as well as to illuminate key issues impacting this community. Additionally, this document will explore the social and historical contexts for these data to provide a comprehensive and nuanced picture for the data and research.¹ The document is divided into six sections:

1. Introduction
2. Community
3. Health
4. Economic Well-Being
5. Educational Attainment
6. Conclusion

Within each section, data are segmented into two subsections – **Positive Data Trends** and **Potentially Challenging Issues**. Data points and research were chosen due to public availability, as well as disaggregation at both the county and race levels. Additionally, the most recent publicly available data were utilized, though there are different reporting years for each data set due to differing sources. When possible, data for Indiana counties with a higher African American population than the overall state (Allen, Lake, and Vanderburgh Counties), as well as counties in neighboring states similar to Marion (Jefferson County/Louisville in Kentucky and Franklin County/Columbus in Ohio) are presented for comparability throughout the sections.

Overall Population Statistics for Black Residents in Marion County

- Indiana had 601,428 African American residents in 2021. Marion County was home to 44.4% of all Black Hoosiers.
- Of total population in Marion County was 971,102 in 2021, 267,313 residents (27.5%) of Marion County were Black alone (not including those who identify as multiple races including Black).



- Including those who identify as Black and perhaps another race, the population increased to around 299,000 residents (about 30.1% of the total Marion County population).
- 27.6% of households – 236,558 – in Marion County were African American.

Source: ACS Table B01001

¹ Please note that the terms African American and Black, as well as Indianapolis and Marion County, are thought to have the same meaning and usage are, therefore, used interchangeably throughout the document.

- Comparatively, Marion County has the largest proportion of Black residents when compared to other Indiana counties. Lake County has the second highest percentage of African American residents and households in the State.
- When compared to Jefferson County, Kentucky (Louisville) and Franklin County, Ohio (Columbus), Marion County has a higher percentage of its population that is Black, though Franklin has a higher number of Black residents at about 307,000. However, Jefferson County home to a larger portion of their states' Black residents (48.8%) in 2021 than both Marion and Franklin Counties.ⁱ

Percentage of Population reporting African American by Zip Code, Marion County: 2020



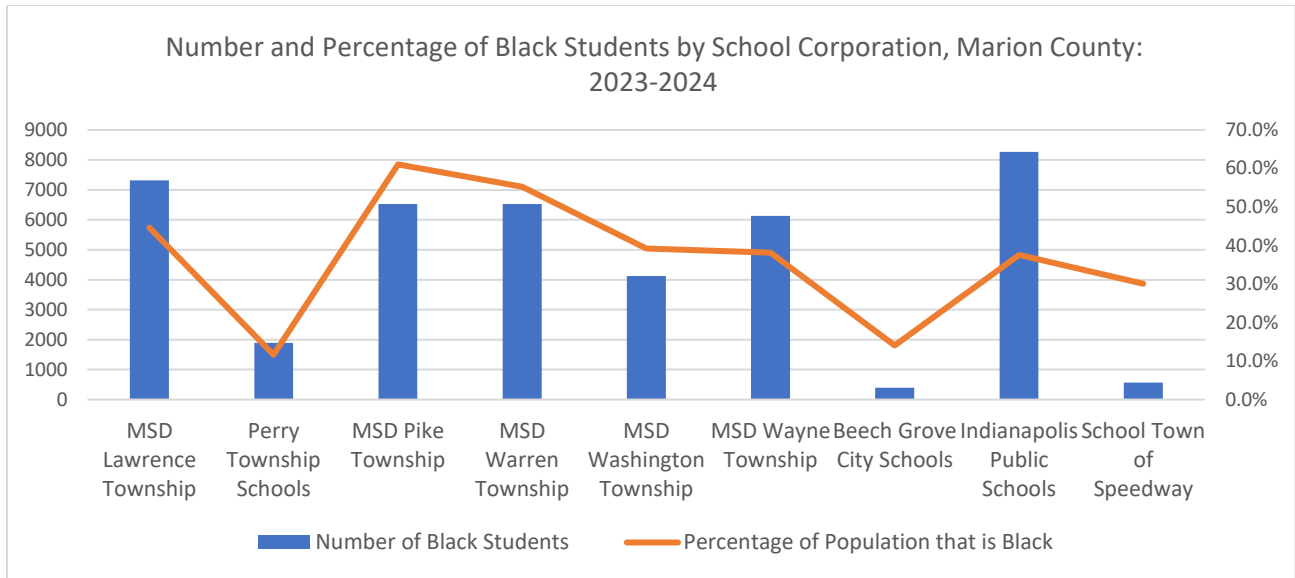
Source: Social Determinants of Health Database, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Of the 56 zip codes comprising Marion County, Black residents comprised a third or more of the total population in the following 18 zip codes:

| Zip Code | Percentage of Residents that are Black |
|----------|--|
| 46218 | 72.2% |
| 46254 | 63.7% |
| 46253 | 63.7% |
| 46235 | 62.0% |
| 46226 | 55.8% |
| 46229 | 54.6% |
| 46208 | 53.3% |
| 46228 | 47.2% |
| 46298 | 44.3% |
| 46268 | 44.3% |
| 46222 | 42.3% |
| 46205 | 41.7% |
| 46260 | 39.8% |
| 46224 | 38.7% |
| 46214 | 38.7% |
| 46216 | 34.0% |
| 46249 | 34.0% |
| 46231 | 32.6% |

Source: Social Determinants of Health Database, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

In the 2023-2024 academic year, there were 41,749 Black students in Marion County, comprising 38.5% of the total student population in the county. Indianapolis Public Schools has the highest number of Black students, though MSD Pike Township has the largest percentage of its student body that was African American.



Source: DOE Data Center and Reports

Community

Positive Data Trends

Leadership

One of the greatest assets for the African American Community in Indianapolis is its rich history and leaders. The current representation of Black individuals in leadership roles throughout Marion County is a significant benefit that the community has and can continue to leverage.

- At least 6 of the 25 City-County Councilmembers are Black (24%), including 2 of the 4 leaders for the majority – including President of the City-County Councilmembers (Vop Osili) and the Majority Leader (Maggie A. Lewis).^{2, ii}
- Out of the 51 school board members around Marion County, 20 (39.2%) are Black.^{3, iii}
- One of Marion County’s school corporations has a Black Superintendent – Aleesia Johnson of Indianapolis Public Schools.

Other notable Black leaders in Marion County include:

- Inez Evans, President and CEO of IndyGo
- Jeffrey Harrison, CEO of Citizens Energy
- Judith Thomas, Deputy Mayor of Indianapolis
- Randal Taylor, Chief of Policy for the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department
- Dr. Virginia A. Caine, Director of the Marion County Public Health Department
- Fred Payne, President & CEO of the United Way of Central Indiana

² These data are based on names, pictures, and biographies of the Councilmembers. A precise racial breakdown is not publicly available.

³ These data are based on names, pictures, and biographies of the Councilmembers. A precise racial breakdown is not publicly available. Additionally, Beech Grove City Schools did not provide the names and pictures of its school board members. The data reflect only 7 of Marion County's districts - with a total of 51 school board members.

Potentially Challenging Issues

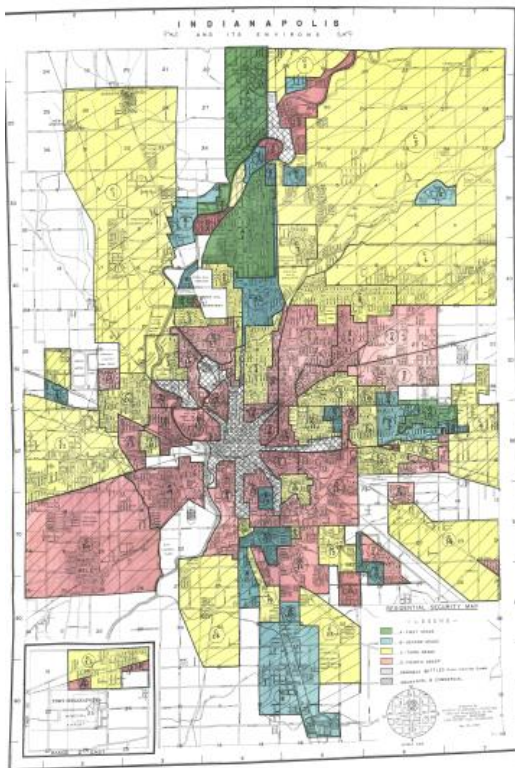
The Lasting Impact of Historical Policies

The United States' history of federal policies that generated the residential segregation continue to impact Black communities across the nation. In Indianapolis, these policies were coupled with local policies to further segregated and disenfranchise African American residents. In 1933, the federal government began a program explicitly designed to increase and segregate America's housing options.

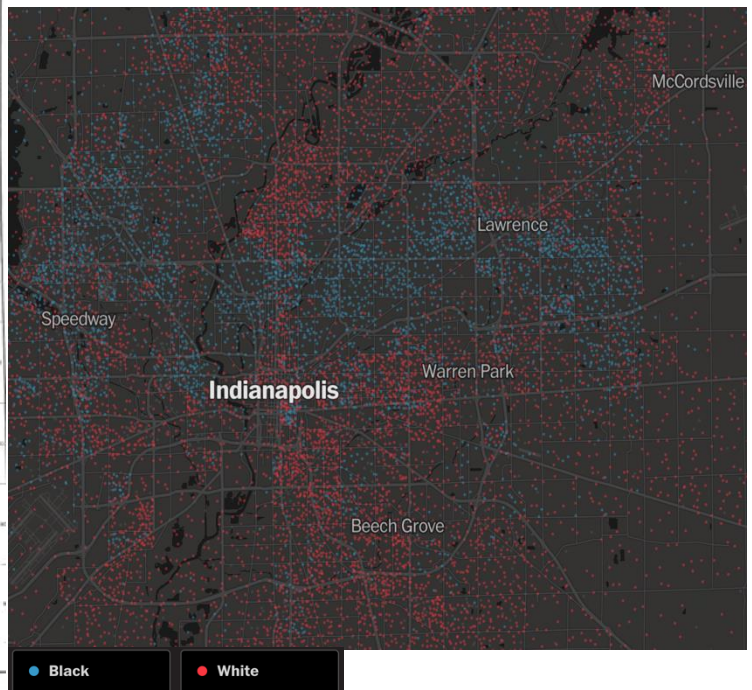
The Federal Housing Administration furthered the housing segregation efforts by refusing to insure mortgages in and near Black neighborhoods, a policy known as "redlining." The federal government color-coded maps of every metropolitan area in the country to indicate where it was safe to insure mortgages, and many Black neighborhoods were colored red to indicate to appraisers that these areas were too risky to insure mortgages.^{iv} Due to redlining and city planning, most Black families in Marion County ended up living in redlined neighborhoods with a "D" grade, which often had environmental concerns, like proximity to major roadways and industrial plants, which led to hazardous health conditions. For example, since the early 1900s, Black residents who have lived by the White River had to endure the effects of Indianapolis' sewage system draining into the river.^v

The two maps below illustrate the lasting effects these federal policies in the 1930s through the early 1970s have had on Black residents in Indianapolis. The first is the redlined map from the Federal Housing Authority's Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in 1940. Those areas in yellow and red were designated as less desirable and potentially hazardous. In the more recent map, residences based on race closely align with previously redlined areas, indicating that African Americans in Indianapolis are still clustered in neighborhoods previously thought of as undesirable and hazardous, potentially inhibiting their quality of life.

Redlined Map versus Map of Black and White Residences, Indianapolis: 1930s and 2016



Source: University of Richmond



Source: Washington Post

The demolition of the Black community along Indiana Avenue in downtown Indianapolis presents an example of how local policies systematically segregated and disenfranchised African Americans in the city. Though Indianapolis was not legally segregated at the time, the city was governed by a complex system of unspoken racist codes that segregated the Black community to the near Westside. Indiana rapidly became home to many Black-owned businesses, churches, social institutions, and jazz clubs. Completion of the Walker Building in 1927 brought additional prominence to the area.

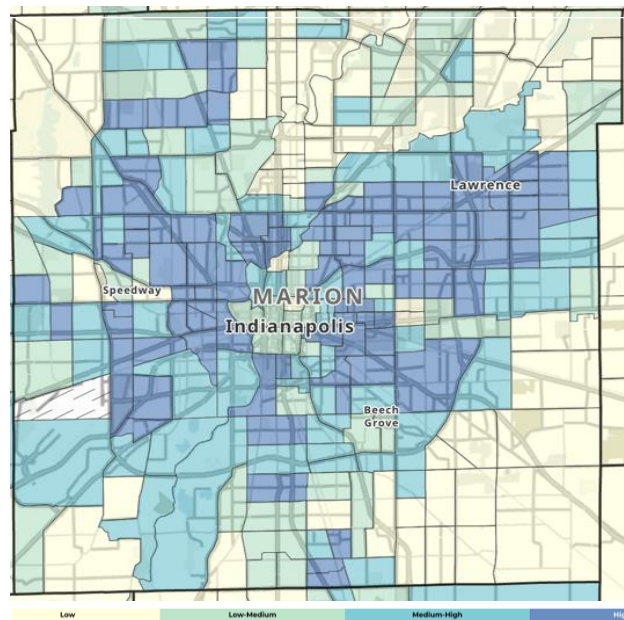
Indiana Avenue flourished economically and culturally during this era; it was called “Indianapolis Harlem.” Also known as “The Avenue,” Indiana Avenue hosted many jazz legends, like Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, and Count Basie, as well as cultivated local talent. It grew into one of the premier music scenes in the country. Through robust Black business leaders and workforce, the Black community contributed significantly to the economy of Indianapolis.^{vi}

Though Indiana Avenue was not the only place where African Americans lived, it served as the heart of Black culture in Indianapolis. The Indianapolis campus of Indiana University started taking over Black property along The Avenue in the 1920s, but the pace accelerated in 1956 when the Medical Center prompted the Indianapolis Redevelopment Commission to declare almost 38 acres of neighborhoods as “blighted” and “substandard” in need of “urban renewal,” which were racialized mischaracterizations of The Avenue. The expansion of an interstate highway and housing for the University through The Avenue furthered the displacement of many residents and worsened living conditions. By the mid-1970s, nearly 100 years of Black culture, businesses, and history had been destroyed. Demolition of The Avenue did not solely impact Indianapolis’ Black culture and community, but it also destroyed generations of building wealth.

Social Vulnerability Index

Social Vulnerability refers to the resilience of communities – the ability to survive and thrive – when confronted by external stresses on human health, such as natural disasters or disease outbreaks. Developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, social and economic resources available to a community, including poverty, lack of access to transportation, and crowded housing, and its underlying vulnerabilities are key factors in how it may prevent human suffering and financial loss in a disaster. The Social Vulnerability Index is used to assess a community’s capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from human and natural disasters. The Since their development in the 2000s, indices of social vulnerability have become an important tool for emergency planning and public health assessment. Reducing social vulnerability can decrease both human suffering and economic loss.^{vii} The map shows which areas of Marion County have high social vulnerability and are more perceptible to devastation during a disaster. The areas with the highest level of social vulnerability are those with a high concentration of Black residents, as well as formerly redlined neighborhoods.

Social Vulnerability Index by Census Tract, Marion County: 2020



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

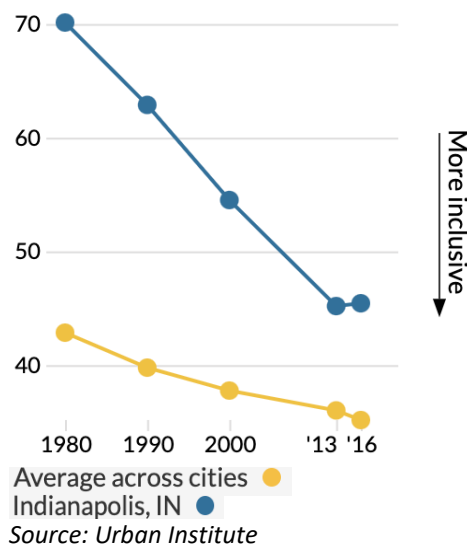
Racial Segregation in Indianapolis

The lack of affordable housing outside of the formerly redlined neighborhoods after the government’s deregulation of housing policies helped residential segregation persist to the present. Racial segregation has produced economic, academic, and health inequities – including limiting access to public spaces, clean air and water, high-performing schools, grocery stores, and childcare facilities. Generally, segregation has strengthened the growth of wealth for White residents while impeding the growth of wealth for Black residents.^{viii}

To measure racial residential segregation, the Divergence Index measures the racial composition of local areas compared to the overall racial composition of the region. The Divergence Index compares the relative proportions of racial groups (or any other groups) at smaller and larger geographies, looking for the degree of “divergence” between the two geographies, such as between a census tract and a county. The index equals zero, which indicates no segregation, when there is no difference between the local and overall race proportions. Higher values of the index indicate greater divergence and more segregation.

- Indianapolis is designated as a high racial segregation based on the 2020 Census with a divergence index of 0.2538. Overall, Indianapolis is ranked 37th for racial segregation when compared to all major cities in the U.S.
- Comparable cities, Columbus and Louisville, are also highly segregated based on race, though their rankings are significantly lower than Indianapolis. Columbus ranks 54th with an index 0.2088, and Louisville ranks 67th with an index of 0.1783 in the U.S.
- Fort Wayne was the only other city in Indiana ranked by the University of California Berkley in their resource. It ranks 77th in the country with an index of 0.161, indicating low-medium segregation.^{ix}

Racial Segregation and Inclusivity Trend, Marion County: 1980 - 2016

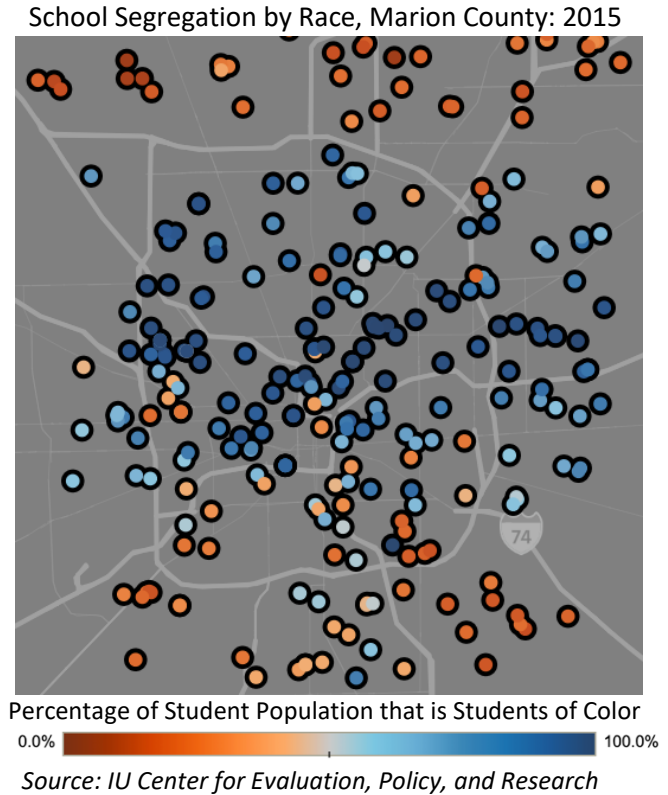


The Urban Institute collected data on 274 of the largest US cities and ranked those cities on economic, racial, and overall inclusion across four decades to better understand what makes cities inclusive. This ranking allows cities to track their progress over time and compare themselves with peer cities. In 2016, Indianapolis ranked 227th out of 274 cities on overall inclusion, 204th on economic inclusion, and 229th on racial inclusion. From 2013 to 2016, Indianapolis’ economic health rank increased from 229th to 211th. Over the same time, the city became slightly less inclusive, falling from 226th to 227th in the overall inclusion rankings.^x

Racial segregation in Indianapolis extends into the school system. The average Black student in Indiana is likely to attend a school where 68% of the students are non-White, while the average White student in Indiana is likely to attend a school where 19% of the students are non-White. In some Indiana counties, such as Lake County, Allen

County, and Marion County, segregation by race/ethnicity is related to school district boundaries, as well as school attendance boundaries within districts.^{xi}

In 1968, the U.S. Justice Department filed suit in federal court against the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) for segregation. The Justice Department fought the school system for years, eventually finding IPS guilty of racial segregation for drawing its school boundaries to take advantage of segregated housing. Judge S. Hugh Dillon forced school integration with a court order for busing that lasted 35 years in Indianapolis, though the segregation in IPS only worsened.^{xii} Many White families from high- and middle-income backgrounds left Indianapolis because of the busing policy. In 1967, IPS enrollment was at nearly 109,000 students, and right before busing started in 1981, enrollment fell to about 57,000 students.^{xiii} Nearly 22,000 students were enrolled in the IPS school district for the 2022-2023 school year.^{xiv}



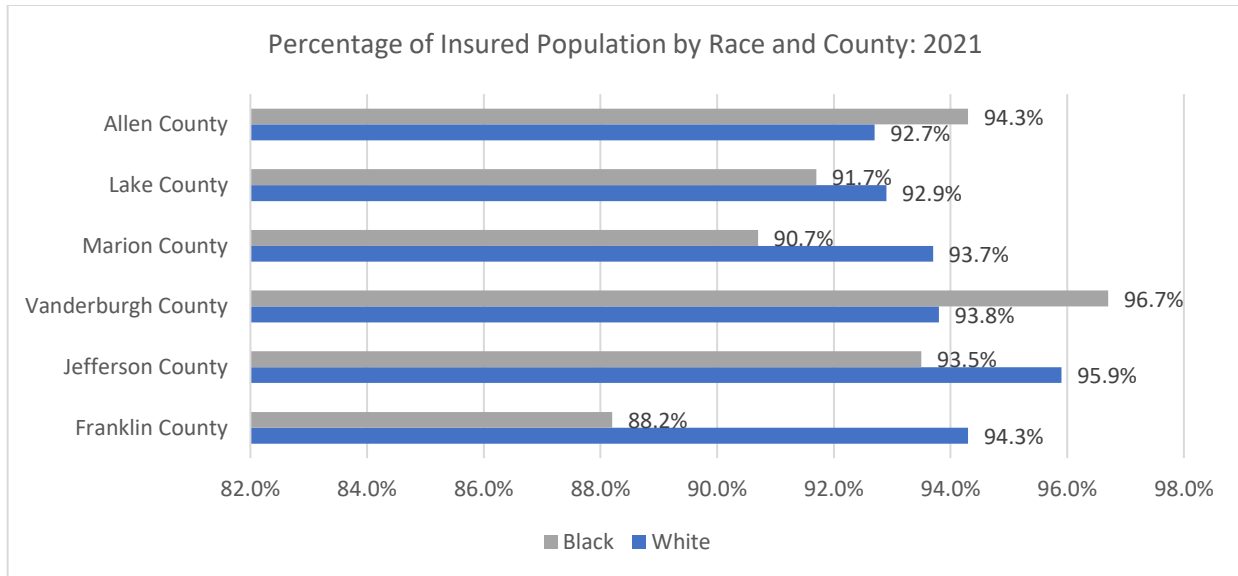
Health

Positive Data Trends

Health Insurance

Healthcare insurance covers essential health benefits and provides better access to preventive care, like vaccines, screenings, and check-ups. Additionally, health insurance can protect individuals from unexpected, high medical costs.

- In 2021, 238,844 Black individuals in Marion County have health insurance (90.7%). This was three percentage points less than White individuals (93.7%), which is near parity between the two communities.
- Conversely, 1 in 10 Black residents in Marion County are uninsured, which was the same percentage of uninsured African American individuals across the State (9.3%) and the US (9.6%).
- However, when examining other counties similar to Marion, the percentage of Black residents that have health insurance is slightly lower – except for Franklin County, Ohio.^{xv}



Source: ACS Table S2701

Access to Healthcare Providers and Resources

One benefit for Marion County residents is the access to healthcare resources and providers.

- The ratio of Indianapolis' population to mental health providers in Marion County in 2021 was 310:1, which was lower than the ratios for Indiana (560:1) and the US (350:1). Only Wayne County had a lower ratio than Marion County at 210:1.
- Additionally, Marion County had the lowest ratio among all other Indiana counties with high black population.
 - Allen – 480:1
 - Lake – 500:1
 - Vanderburgh – 440:1
- When compared to similar cities, though, Indianapolis' ratio was higher, indicating that other cities have greater access to mental health resources.
 - Jefferson County – 290:1
 - Franklin County – 280:1^{xvi}
- The ratio of primary care providers in Marion County – 1,220:1 – was lower than Indiana's ratio of 1,490:1 and the US of 1,310:1.
- Marion County's ratio was also lower than other counties in Indiana, again indicating a higher level of access to health resources in Indianapolis.
 - Allen – 1,380:1
 - Lake – 1,900:1
 - Vanderburgh – 1,240:1
- Similar to mental health providers, though, Indianapolis' ratio is higher than similar cities outside of Indiana, further illustrating that though Marion County is rich in resources compared to other locales in Indiana, the city is lagging resources compared to similarly sized cities.
 - Jefferson County – 1,060:1
 - Franklin County – 960:1^{xvii}

Though Marion County offers high access to healthcare providers and resources, there are no data illustrating the rate of usage of these resources by African American residents. Nationally, Black communities are less likely to use mental health services than their White peers. Research from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration concluded that Black adults used about half as much outpatient care, such as counseling or medication, as White adults based on a national survey.

Additionally, Black people are less likely than White people to receive culturally competent healthcare, which could impede their access to and use of health-related resources.^{xviii}

Potentially Challenging Issues

Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. They include factors like socioeconomic status, education, neighborhood and physical environment, employment, and social support networks, as well as access to health care.

Addressing social determinants of health is important for improving health and reducing longstanding disparities in health

of the data are discussed in this brief – such as insurance coverage, educational attainment, these data with inform local planning across sectors who improve the people’s health, ultimately, their



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

and health care. Many comprising the SDOH throughout this research poverty, health social vulnerability, and attainment. Combining health outcomes can activities for partners have the shared goal to conditions in environments and, health.^{xix}

Environmental Factors Impacting Health

- Superfund sites are contaminated sites that exist due to hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or improperly managed. Sites are usually manufacturing plants, landfills, and mining sites. Superfund sites can impact the health of the communities that live close by.^{xx} In Indiana, there are 53 superfund sites in Indiana. Five of these superfund sites are in Marion County, the 2nd highest county in the state after Lake County.^{xxi}
- Like the Indiana counties with the largest number of Superfund sites, counties with the highest number of children with one or more elevated test results equal to or greater than 10 micrograms per liter correspond to counties that have higher percentages of diversity. In 2020, Marion County had the highest number of children that test with results equal to or greater than 10 micrograms per liter at 66 children, which was 12.6% of total number children who tested to high exposure levels around the State.^{xxii}

Mental Health

Overall, mental health conditions occur in African American people in the U.S. at about the same or less frequency than in White Americans. Nationally, the adult Black community is 20% more likely to experience serious mental health problems, such as Major Depressive Disorder or Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Additionally, help-seeking behavior is affected by historical abuses of the African Americans by the medical community and current mistrust of the medical system leads to lower utilization of mental health care among the Black community. Unfortunately, several factors may impede Black people from seeking help and treatment.

- African American mental health providers make up a very small portion of the behavioral health provider workforce. Less than 2% of American Psychological Association members are Black. Therefore, the lack of cultural competence or cultural responsiveness among mental healthcare

providers may be impacting the treatment of Black patients, as well as furthering the stigma of seeking help.

- Many African Americans hold beliefs related to stigma, psychological openness, and help-seeking, which in turn affects their coping behaviors. In the Black community, there is often difficulty acknowledging psychological difficulties, but useful strategies including religious coping and methods such as pastoral guidance and prayer often are the most preferred coping mechanism.
 - Black men were particularly concerned about the stigma associated with mental health and treatment.
 - Research has found many Black individuals may not be open to acknowledging psychological problems, but they were somewhat open to seek mental health services.
- Cohort effects, exposure to mental illness, and increased knowledge of mental illness are factors that could potentially change beliefs about symptoms of mental illness.^{xxiii}
- Facing structural racism, discrimination and inequity can also significantly affect a person's mental health and may be a significant factor for many Black individuals' persistent symptoms of emotional distress, such as sadness, hopelessness and feeling like everything is an effort.^{xxiv}
- According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2019 data, only one in three Black adults who need mental health care receive it.^{xxv}

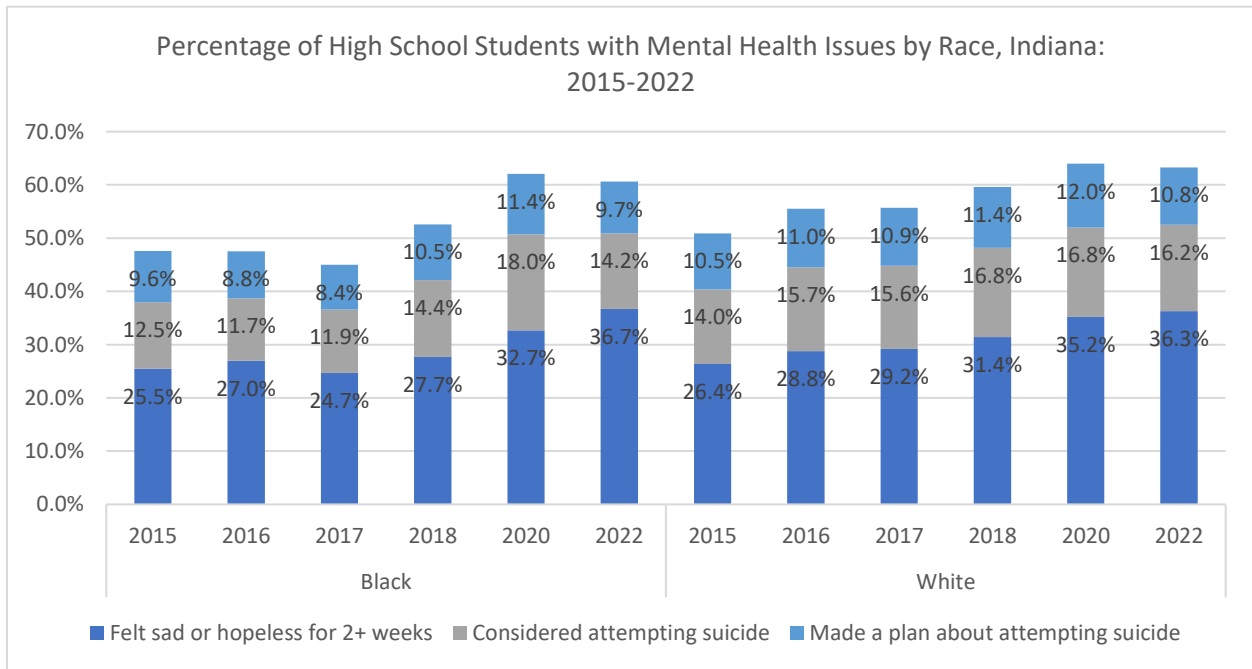
Data on the prevalence of mental health issues, however, are unavailable when disaggregating for both county and race. Therefore, generalized data for Black individuals and communities across the U.S. and Indiana are used to provide insight into the conditions of the community in Marion County.

- Black people in the U.S. living below poverty are twice as likely to report serious psychological distress than those living at 200% or more above the poverty level.
- Adult African Americans are more likely to have feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness than White adults.
- Black individuals are less likely than white people to die from suicide at all ages, though suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts had increased among Black prior to COVID-19.
 - Black teenagers are more likely to attempt suicide than White teenagers – 9.8% versus 6.1%, respectively.^{xxvi}
 - Black females in high school were 60% more likely to attempt suicide in 2019, as compared to White females of the same age.^{xxvii}
 - While still lower than the overall U.S. population aged 18-25, 9.5% (439,000) of Black 18-25-year-olds had serious thoughts of suicide in 2018, compared to 6% (277,000) in 2008; 3.6% (166,000) made a plan in 2018, compared to 2.1% (96,000) in 2008; and 2.4% (111,000) made an attempt in 2018, compared to 1.5% (70,000) in 2008.
 - The death rate from suicide for black or African American men was four times greater than for African American women in 2018.
- In 2018, 16% (4.8 million) of African Americans reported having a mental illness, and 22.4% of those (1.1 million people) reported a serious mental illness.
 - Serious mental illness (SMI) rose among all ages of Black people between 2008 and 2018.
- Binge drinking, smoking (cigarettes and marijuana), illicit drug use, and prescription pain reliever misuse are more frequent among African American adults with mental illnesses.^{xxviii}
- Black people are more often diagnosed with schizophrenia and less often diagnosed with mood disorders compared to white people with the same symptoms.
- Additionally, they are offered medication or therapy at the lower rates than the general population.

- Black and African American people with mental health conditions, specifically those involving psychosis, are more likely to be in jail or prison than people of other races.^{xxix}
- Additionally, for those individuals who are Black and part of the LGBTQ+, experience higher rates of mental health issues and stress than the overall Black community. Over one-quarter (26%) of Black LGBTQ+ adults have been diagnosed with depression. Black LGBTQ+ (29%) women were more likely to be diagnosed with depression than Black LGBTQ+ (21%).
- For Black LGBTQ+ youth, the percentages of those with mental health issues increases significantly – 57% of Black LGBTQ+ Black youth across the U.S. reported experiencing symptoms of depression, and 66% reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety in 2022.^{xxx}

Disaggregation of mental health data by both county and race is a current limitation in understanding the scope of the mental health for the Black community of Marion County. There are data for Black Hoosiers writ large, which, similar to national data for the Black community, that can be used as a proxy for specific data on Indianapolis’ Black community.

- The percentage of Black high school youth in Indiana with depressive thoughts and suicidal ideation is not as high as that of White youth. However, the percentage of Black youth with these thoughts spiked in 2020 and have remained high post-COVID.
- In 2020, Black youth had a higher percentage of suicidal ideation than their White peers – 18.0% and 16.8%, respectively.^{xxxi}
- In 2022, the percentage of Black students who felt persistent sadness or hopelessness (36.7%) was slightly higher than that of White students (36.3%), which is an anomaly in the data.^{xxxii}



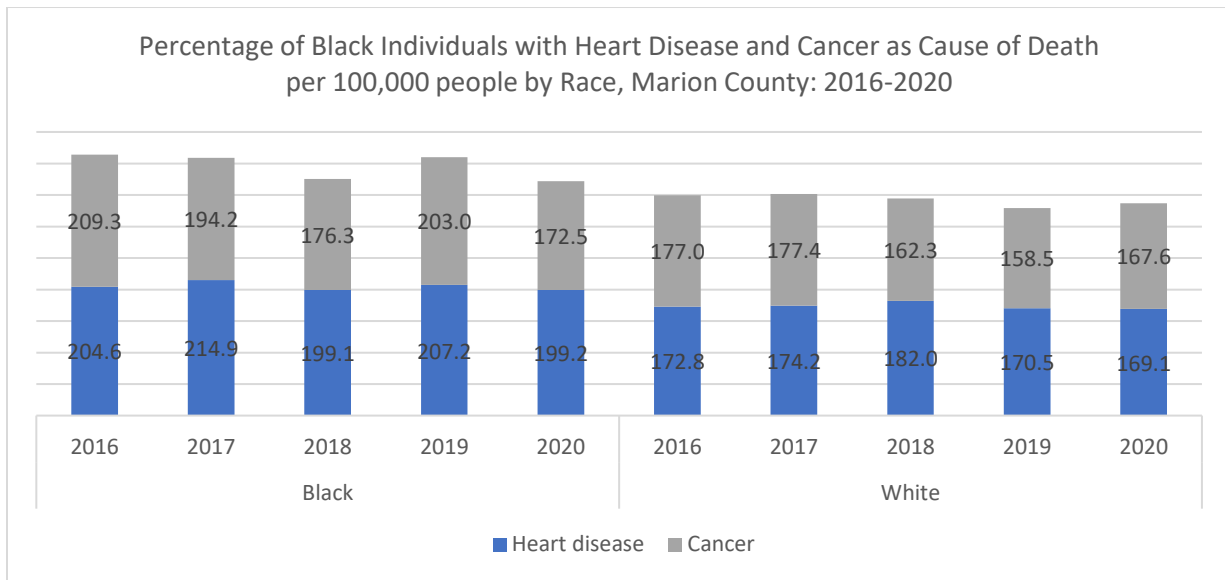
Source: Indiana Youth Survey

Causes of Death

When examining the causes of death for African American residents in Marion County, the two most common causes are cancer and heart disease.

- Since 2016, the rates for deaths due to cancer or heart disease within the Marion County African American community have been greater than 170 deaths per 100,000 individuals.

- The rates for both diseases have been greater in the Black community than they have been in the White community. Potential causes for this include genetic predisposition, social determinants of health, lifestyle (e.g., tobacco usage), as well as environmental factors.
- The frequency of deaths caused by diabetes, homicide, and stroke in the Black community are also marked differences with the White Community.
 - The rate of diabetes-related deaths for Black individuals in Marion County was 54.0 in 2020; for White individuals, the rate of diabetes-related deaths was 33.3.
 - Homicide had a rate of 60.5 for African Americans, whereas the White homicide rate was 9.9. Additional information on homicides is provided below.
 - The rate of deaths caused by strokes for African Americans was 49.7 versus 36.0 for White individuals.^{xxxiii}



Source: CDC WONDER Database

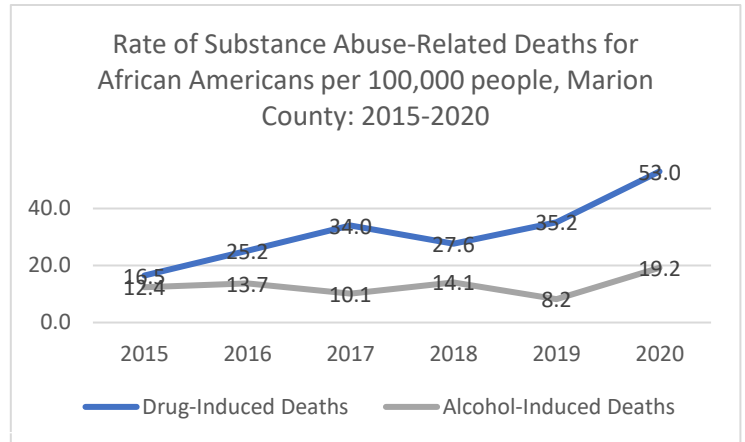
- Three areas of difference for which White individuals had higher rates than their Black peers were respiratory diseases, drug overdoses, and suicide.
 - The rate of deaths caused by respiratory disease for the White community in Marion County was 60.0 in 2020. For Black individuals, the rate was 39.8.
 - Drug overdoses had a rate of 72.3 for White individuals and 53.0 for Black individuals. Additional information is provided below.
 - The rate of suicides within the White community was more than twice as much as the Black community – 19 and 9, respectively. Additional information is provided below.^{xxxiv}

Substance Abuse

Substance abuse of alcohol and drugs are prevalent in Marion County with over 700 substance abuse-related deaths in the County in 2020. When examining substance abuse among African Americans in Marion County, the data indicate a higher usage rate of drugs rather than alcohol. However, both White and African American residents in Marion County are abusing and dying from drugs and alcohol at high rates.

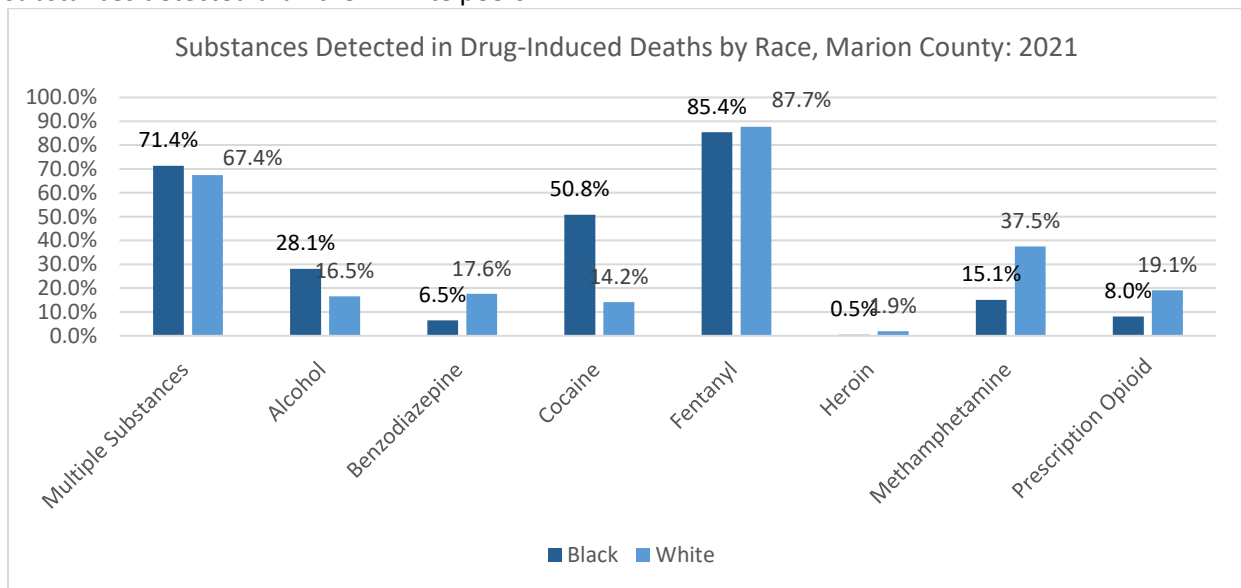
- In 2020, there were 189 alcohol-induced deaths and 597 drug-induced deaths. Of these deaths, 53 alcohol-induced deaths (28.0%) and 152 drug-induced deaths (25.5%) were Black residents. These figures have been increasing steadily since 2015.

- The rate of drug-induced deaths per 100,000 individuals has also been steadily increasing over the past few years. For African Americans in Marion County, there were 53 drug-induced deaths per 100,00 people in 2020 – more than twice the rate of 2016.
- The rate for alcohol-induced deaths, though lower than the drug rate, had been decreasing until 2020. In 2020, there were 19.2 alcohol-induced deaths for Black individuals – more than twice the rate of 2019.^{xxxv}



Source: CDC WONDER Database

In 2021, drug-induced deaths for Black residents increased to 199 – 29.5% of all the drug-induced deaths in Marion County. Fentanyl was often the most common substance detected in those that had passed for both Black (85.4%) and White (87.7%) residents. While methamphetamine was the second most common substance detected for White individuals, African Americans’ second most common substance was cocaine. Additionally, a higher percentage of Black individuals who died due to drugs had multiple substances detected than their White peers.^{xxxvi}

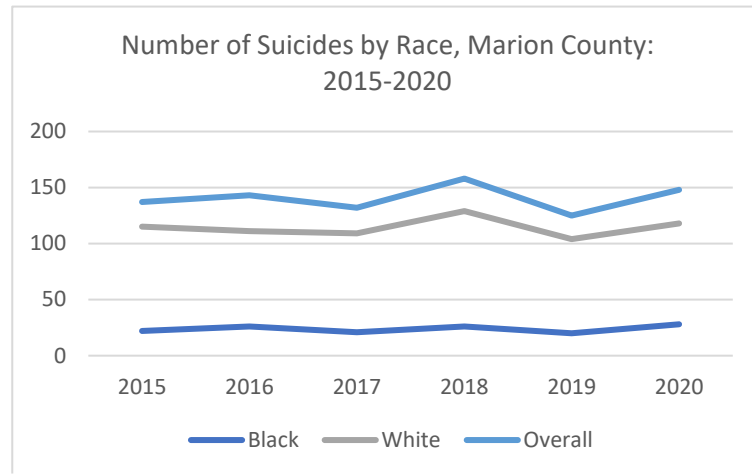


Source: CDC WONDER Database

Suicide

In 2020, 79 African American Hoosiers took their lives, which was 10.6% of all suicides in Indiana.

- Twenty-eight (35.4%) of the suicides committed by Black Hoosiers occurred in Marion County.
- Of the 148 suicides that happened in Marion County in 2020, 18.9% were committed by Black residents.
- These percentages of suicides of African Americans in Marion County are positively disproportionate to the population of the community both in the county and the state, because Black residents comprise a higher percentage – 8% and 30%, respectively – than that of suicides.^{xxxvii}



Source: CDC WONDER Database

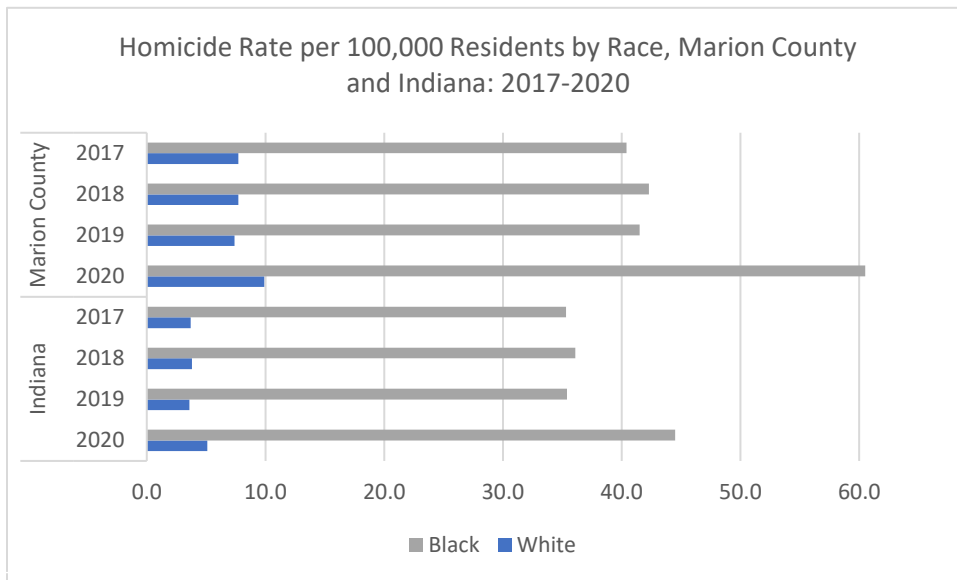
- However, suicides of African Americans in Marion County have steadily been increasing over the past few years as suicides widely have become more prevalent. Additionally, with the stress of COVID, police violence and deaths, and other social and economic factors, suicidal ideation, attempts, and events may have become more widespread.

Violence and Homicide

As discussed above, homicide was a leading cause of death for African Americans in Marion County in 2020. The homicide rate for Black residents was 60.5 per 100,000 individuals, whereas the White homicide rate was 9.9^{xxxviii} As the notion of crime in Black neighborhoods continues to dominate discourse, the lack of context for such data in public discourse perpetuates the myth that intra-racial violence is specific to the Black community and that Black people are inherently violent. The suggestion that Black people are predisposed to violence dates back as 1896 when it was included in the first nationwide report on racial crime data, though civil rights advocates at the time challenged the report by noting the different ways in which Black and white Americans are treated by the justice system and the relationship between crime and the threat of poverty due to systemic racism. Present-day narratives about crime in the Black communities often fail to highlight the disproportionate level of victimization in Black communities, as well as the connection between violence and structural racism.^{xxxix, xl}

In the data below, it is critical to note that the homicide rate represents victims of homicide rather than perpetrators. As the data illustrate, most victims of homicide in Marion County are Black, but the identity of the perpetrators is unknown and, thus, any conclusion regarding the race of the perpetrators from these data would be a misinterpretation.

In Indiana, Black Hoosiers are more likely to die by homicide than their White peers, though both races



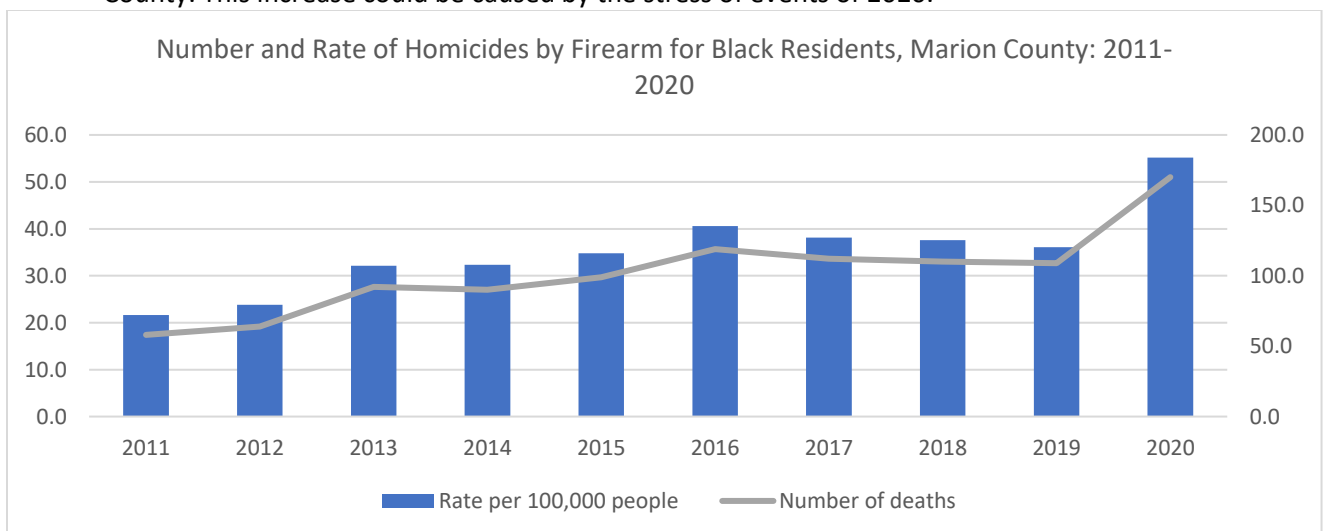
have higher rates of homicide deaths in Marion County than the state. Both Marion County and Indiana saw an increase in homicide deaths for both Black and White residents in 2020.^{xli} This may be due to an increase in economic, health, and social stress due to the tumultuous time.

Source: CDC WONDER Database

disproportionately impacted by gun violence. They experience 10 times the gun homicides, 18 times the gun assault injuries, and nearly 3 times the fatal police shootings of white Americans. These trends worsen in large cities, where Black Americans make up 68% of homicide victims. Indianapolis, similarly, has higher rate homicide by firearm rate (23.1) than Indiana (7.8).

Nationally, Black Americans are

- The rate of homicides by firearm for African Americans in Marion County was 55.2 in 2020. This was higher than the rate of homicide by firearm for Black Hoosiers across Indiana of 39.7.
- 170 Black individuals died by firearms in Marion County. These deaths comprised more than half of the total 307 Black Hoosiers that died by firearm homicide.
- As evidenced by the data below, the number and rate of African Americans with a cause of death of homicide by firearm has slowly increased over the past decade with a significant increase in 2020. In 2019, almost one-third fewer Black individuals died by firearm in Marion County. This increase could be caused by the stress of events of 2020.^{xlii}



Source: CDC WONDER Database

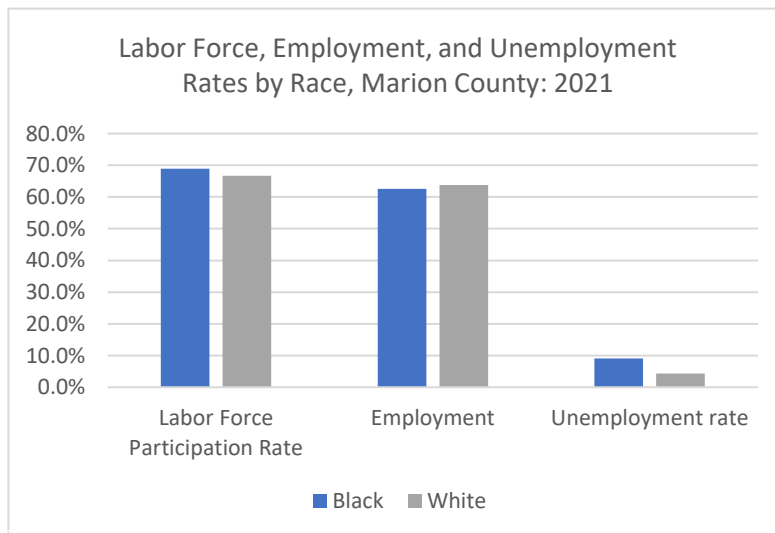
Economic Well-Being

Positive Data Trends

Labor Force Participation

The labor force includes all people aged 16 and older who are classified as either employed or unemployed. Many people who are not in the labor force are either students, retirees, a stay-at-home parent, or someone who is not actively looking for work.^{xliii}

- The labor force participation rate for Black residents in Marion County was 68.9% in 2021.
 - This was slightly higher than that of White residents with a labor participation rate of 66.7%.
 - The labor force participation for Black residents in Marion County was also higher than that of all Black Hoosiers (62.7%).
- The employment of Black Marion County residents was a little more than a percentage point less than White residents – 62.6% and 63.8%, respectively.
 - The employment rate for Black residents of Indianapolis was higher than that of all Black Hoosiers (56.6%) and all White Hoosiers (60.2%).
- The unemployment rate of Black individuals in Marion County was 9.1% in 2021, which was more than twice the unemployment rate of White individuals of 4.3%. The unemployment rate of all African Americans in Indiana was slightly higher than that of Marion County at 9.6%.^{xliv}



Source: ACS Table S2301

Economic Growth

Though people of color make up about one-fifth of Indiana's population, minority small business owners represented only 16% of the state's businesses in 2017. These disparities are particularly stark for Black business owners – Black Hoosiers own businesses at just 15% of the rate of their overall share of Indiana's population, which ranks Indiana 26th out of the 40 states with data available. Among the 85 largest U.S. metro areas with data available on the racial breakdown of business ownership, Indianapolis ranks 55th with only 8.9% of

businesses that are Black owned.^{xlv} There are several organizations leading the economic and business development for African Americans in Marion County, including the Indiana Black Expo, the Indianapolis Urban League, and the Indy Black Chamber of Commerce. In 2021, the Indy Black Chamber of Commerce had 82 new small businesses join as members, an increase of 33%.^{xlvi} There have also been several recent campaigns launched by Black entrepreneurs in Marion County, including Indy Black Businesses Matter, Indy Black Owned, Downtown Indy Inc.'s Rebuilding and Recovery Committee, the InnoPower Partnership with Goldman Sachs, the Real Estate Assistance Fund for Black-Owned Businesses, and Black Dolla Dining Days.^{xlvii, xlviii, xlix, l, lliii}

Access to Workforce Development Resources

The access to resources specifically focused on economic improvement and development in Indianapolis provides another positive trend for the African American community. Below are a few examples of the resources Black residents have access to in Marion County.⁴

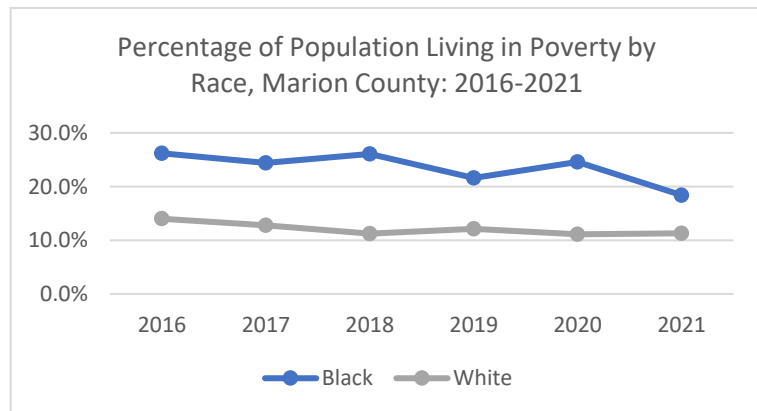
- **PACE** in Marion County partners with the Workforce Development Boards in the Central Indiana region to provide ex-offenders with financial, employment, and mental health coaching, as well as other forms of wraparound supports and resources.
- **YES Indy** is a program to re-engage youth ages 18 to 24 who are neither employed nor in school in Marion County.
- **Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana – The Excel Center’s** mission is a tuition-free public high school for adults offering a high school diploma. There are currently six locations in Indianapolis – W. Michigan Street, The Meadows, Shadeland, W. 34th Street, University Heights, and Decatur. The **New Beginnings** program is 6 months long and focuses on the development of soft and technical skills.
- **Opportunity Zones** are a federal designation to encourage long-term private capital investment in low-income urban and rural communities. The goal of the [Opportunity Investment Consortium of Indiana](#) is to encourage the transformation of Opportunity Zone neighborhoods into vibrant places for residents and businesses. There are 36 Opportunity Zones in Marion County – the highest in the State.

Potentially Challenging Issues

Poverty

Poverty, one of the social determinants of health, is a significant challenge facing the Black community of Indianapolis. The United States measures poverty based on how an individual’s or family’s income compares to a set federal threshold. For example, in the 2021 definition, people are considered impoverished if their individual income is below \$12,880 or their household income is below \$26,500 for a family of 4. People living in poverty often have reduced access to resources that are needed to support a healthy quality of life. Poverty can also limit access to educational and employment opportunities, which further contributes to income inequality and perpetuates cyclical effects of poverty.

Across one’s lifespan, those living in poverty are at increased risk for mental illness, chronic disease, higher mortality, and lower life expectancy. Childhood poverty, in particular, is associated with developmental delays, toxic stress, chronic illness, and nutritional deficits. Individuals who experience childhood poverty are more likely to experience poverty into adulthood, which contributes to generational cycles of poverty. In addition to lasting effects of childhood poverty, adults living in poverty are at a higher risk of adverse health effects from obesity, smoking,

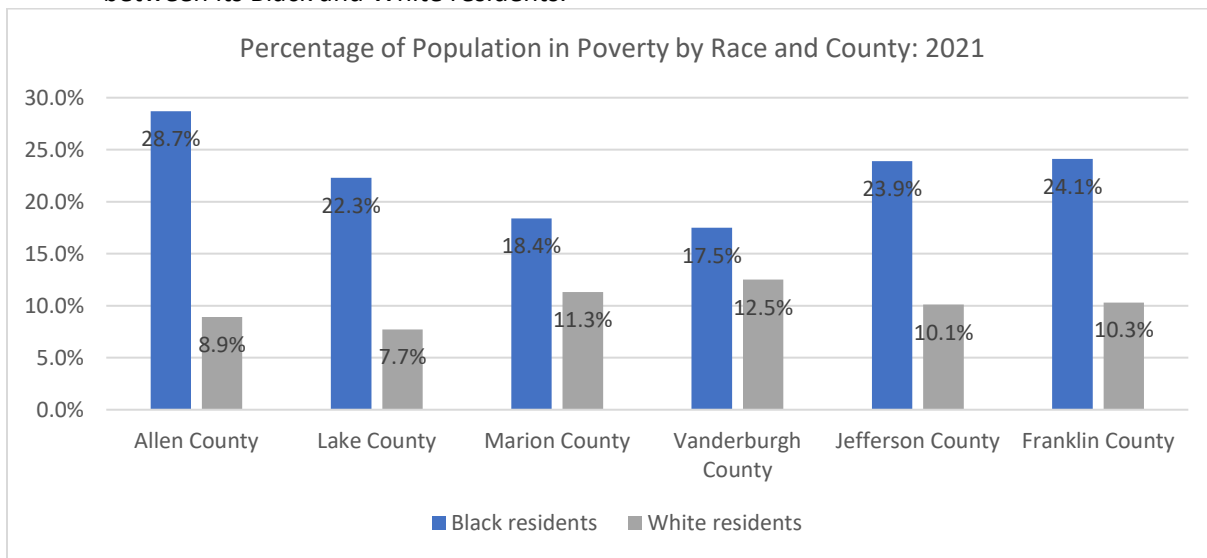


Source: B17020A and B17020B

⁴ Please note that data regarding Black residents’ use of these resources are not publicly available, thus this data point reflects only access to resources.

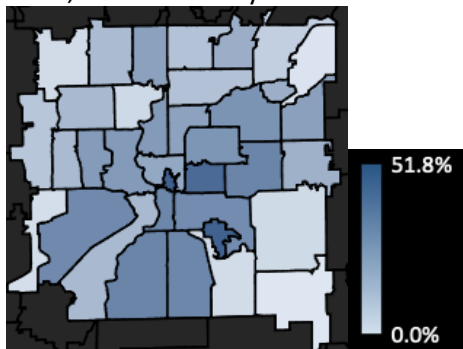
substance use, and chronic stress. Finally, older adults with lower incomes experience higher rates of disability and mortality.^{liii}

- In 2021, 18.4% of Marion County’s African American population lived in poverty. This was less than the overall poverty rate for Black Hoosiers of 20.6%.
- The poverty rate for the Black population in Marion County is about 7 percentage points higher than the poverty rate for White residents. Historically, the poverty rate for the Black population has been 7 to 10 percentage points higher than the White population.
- Compared to other cities in Indiana, Marion County’s poverty rate for Black residents ranks the second lowest after Vanderburgh. Allen (28.7%) and Lake (22.3%) Counties both have higher poverty rates for their African American residents.
- When examining similar cities to Indianapolis, the percentage of Black individuals living in poverty in Marion County is also lower – Jefferson County had 23.9% and Franklin County had 24.1% of its Black residents in poverty. Additionally, Marion County has a smaller poverty gap between its Black and White residents.^{liiv}



Source: ACS Table S1701

Percentage of Black Population Living Below Poverty Level by Zip Code, Marion County: 2020



Source: Social Determinants of Health Database, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Specific zip codes in Marion County have higher percentages of Black residents living in poverty than others. Interestingly, these zip codes do not correlate with those of the highest percentage of Black residents, which could be an indication that poverty in Marion County is not necessarily concentrated in African American neighborhoods. This data trend signifies that current policies may be continuing to marginalize the city’s Black community writ large.

Additionally, when examining poverty versus population data, disproportionality emerges. Disproportionality in data refers to a group’s representation in a particular category that differs substantially from the representation of others in that category. In many of the zip codes where a high percentage of Black residents live in poverty, they do not comprise a similar – or proportionate – population percentage. The

disproportionality in these zip codes' data is both a cause and a consequence of factors in the economy and society.

| Zip code | Percentage of Black residents in Poverty | Percentage of Black Residents |
|----------|--|-------------------------------|
| 46244 | 51.8% | 14.4% |
| 46262 | 51.8% | 14.4% |
| 46277 | 51.8% | 50.9% |
| 46255 | 51.8% | 14.4% |
| 46288 | 51.8% | 24.7% |
| 46204 | 51.8% | 33.4% |
| 46282 | 51.8% | 32.6% |
| 46107 | 51.1% | 2.3% |
| 46201 | 47.9% | 24.0% |
| 46283 | 47.9% | 24.7% |
| 46217 | 37.5% | 39.2% |
| 46219 | 37.4% | 14.4% |
| 46227 | 36.8% | 12.2% |
| 46247 | 36.8% | 13.5% |
| 46225 | 36.7% | 17.4% |
| 46209 | 36.7% | 57.9% |
| 46207 | 36.7% | 18.2% |
| 46206 | 36.7% | 4.6% |
| 46251 | 35.9% | 11.5% |
| 46242 | 35.9% | 0.2% |
| 46241 | 35.9% | 36.5% |
| 46203 | 34.6% | 39.8% |

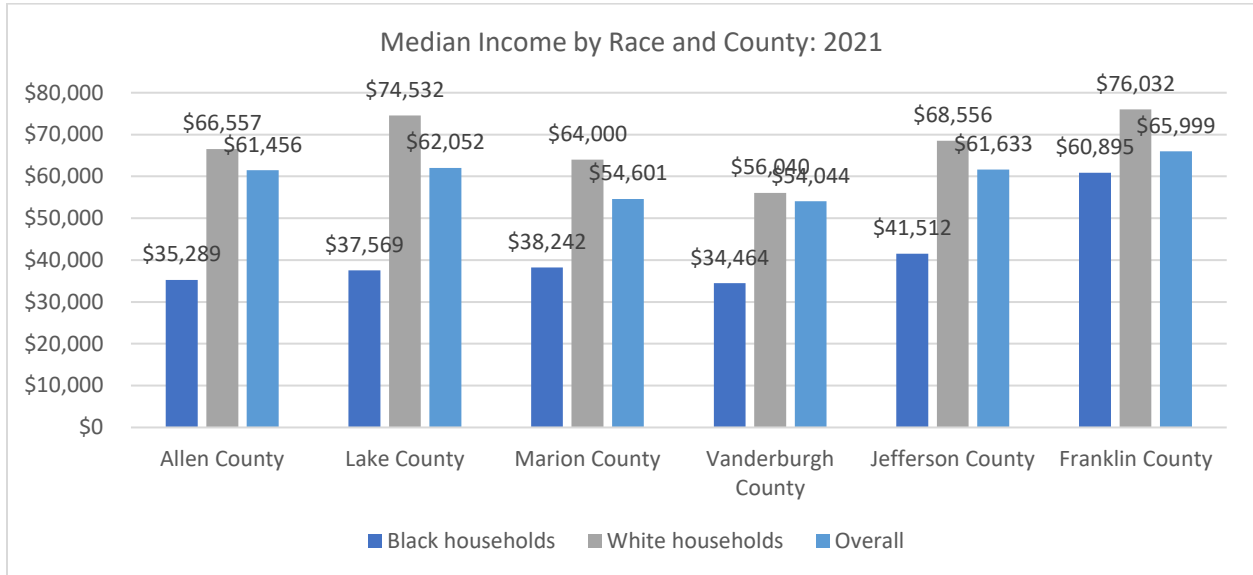
Source: ACS Table S1701

Median Income

The median divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. Median household income provides information about the financial resources available to households, and is closely tied to employment levels, educational attainment, and health.

- In 2021, Black households' median income was \$38,242, which was an increase from 2020's median of \$35,961.
- However, the median income for African American households was almost half of White households' median income of \$64,400 and about two-thirds of the overall median income for all households in Marion County of \$54,601.
- When compared to other Indiana counties, a similar trend emerges – Black households' median income is significantly less than both the overall and White households' median income. Often, Black households' median income is almost half of White households (except Vanderburgh County). Marion County's median income gap between Black and White households is less than both Lake and Allen Counties.

- Compared to Jefferson and Franklin Counties in neighboring states, however, Marion County's gap is significantly worse. In Franklin County, specifically, the gap between Black and White households is about \$5,100. Also, both Black and White households in Franklin are below the overall median income for the county. The gap in Jefferson County is about also narrower with African American households' median income about two-thirds of White households.^{iv}

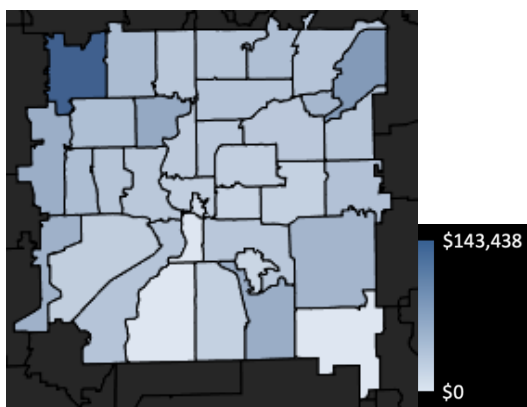


Source: ACS Table S1903⁵

When examining the distribution of median income of Black household in Marion County, the areas with the lowest median income are the areas with the highest density of Black residents. In several zip codes, Black households have a minimal median income of \$12,500, which is below the federal poverty line.

- 46204
- 46244
- 46255
- 46288
- 46262
- 42677
- 46282

Median Income for Black Households by Zip Code, Marion County: 2020



Source: Social Determinants of Health Database, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

The Black households in several zip codes, though, have a median income above Marion County's overall median.^{lvi}

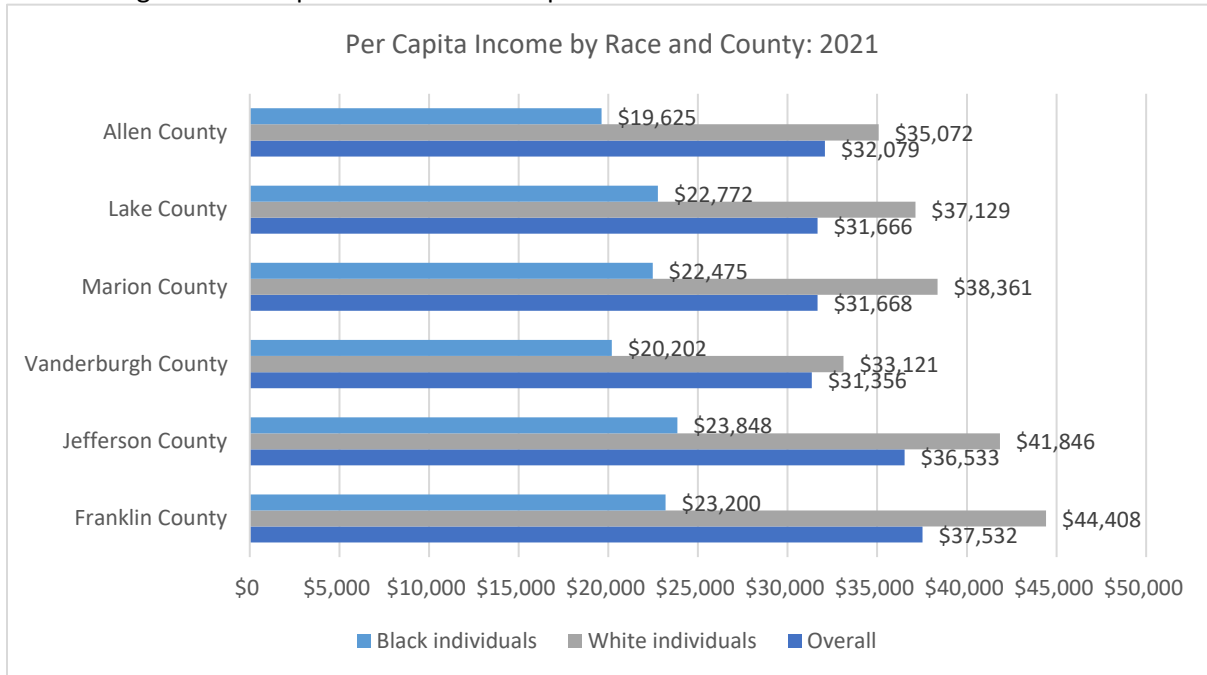
| | |
|-------|-----------|
| 46231 | \$56,607 |
| 46234 | \$60,101 |
| 46237 | \$60,603 |
| 46228 | \$65,605 |
| 46236 | \$81,578 |
| 46278 | \$143,438 |

Per Capita Income

Per capita income is the total income of an area divided across the number of all residents (including children). It is used to determine the average per-person income for an

⁵ Note: 5-Year Estimates were used for these data.

area and to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life of the population. Like median income, there are considerable gaps in the per capita income of Black and White individuals in Marion County, as well as comparable counties. Additionally, all the per capita income of all counties' Black residents is sizably less than the overall per capita income for the county. Though Marion County's per capita income gap between Black and White individuals is not as large as other counties, as an indicator for quality of life, the data indicate that African Americans in Indianapolis have a significant economic disadvantage when compared to their White peers.^{lvii}

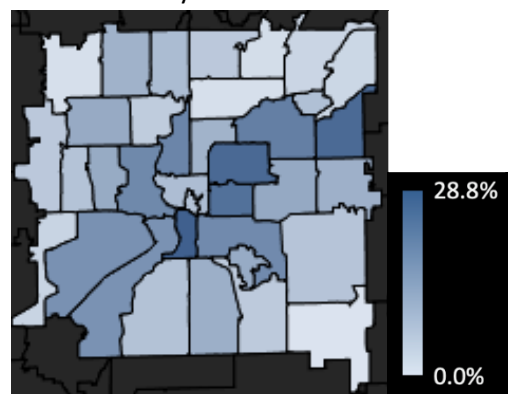


Source: ACS Table B19301A and B19301B⁶

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity, another social determinant of health, is defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. The risk for food insecurity increases when money to buy food is limited or not available and with high unemployment. Adults who are food insecure may be at an increased risk for a variety of negative health outcomes and health disparities, such as obesity and chronic illnesses. Food-insecure children may also be at an increased risk for a variety of negative health outcomes, including obesity. In addition, reduced frequency, quality, variety, and quantity of consumed foods may have a negative effect on children's mental health. Receipt of SNAP benefits (commonly known as food stamps) indicates that an individual or family has an income that signals potential food insecurity.^{lviii}

Percentage of Black Households Receiving SNAP Benefits by Zip Code, Marion County: 2020

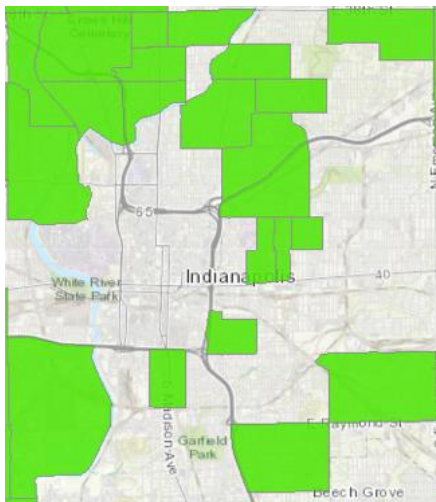


Source: Social Determinants of Health Database, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

⁶ Note: 5-Year Estimates were used for these data.

- Of the 108,895 African American households in Marion County, 25,283 households (23.4%) received SNAP benefits in 2021. Comparatively, 7.2% of the 234,618 White households received SNAP benefits.
- Of the 68,160 households that received SNAP benefits in Marion County in 2021, Black households comprised 37.1% of the total population receiving SNAP benefits in Marion County – compared to 24.8% of White households.^{lix}
- Like the percentage of Black residents living in poverty, the percentage of African Americans receiving SNAP benefits by zip code in Marion County does not follow the trend of other data indicators where the largest percentage of those receiving SNAP benefits correlates with the higher percentage of Black residents. Again, this may indicate a pervasiveness of poverty

Low-income areas with Low Access (1 to 10 miles) to Grocery Stores, Marion County: 2019



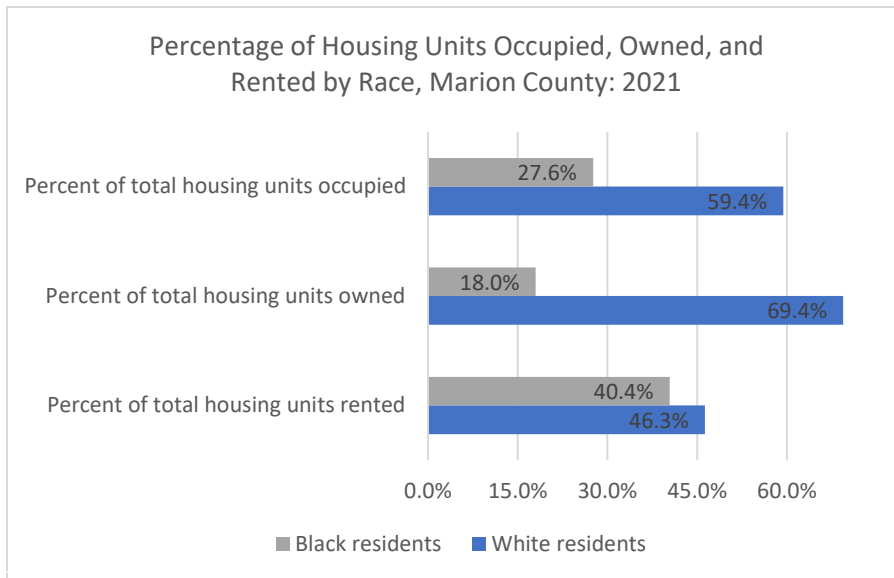
Source: USDA Atlas

throughout Marion County uncorrelated to neighborhood. Additionally, like poverty, this prevalence of food insecurity may indicate that the city's policies may need to look beyond only neighborhood segmentation and instead at deeper roots of structural racism.

Neighborhood conditions may also affect physical access to food. For example, people living in some urban, low-income neighborhoods may have limited access to full-service supermarkets or grocery stores. Convenience stores may have higher food prices, lower-quality foods, and less variety of foods than supermarkets or grocery stores. Access to healthy foods is also affected by lack of transportation and long distances between residences and supermarkets or grocery stores. In Marion County, large swaths of the city are both low-income and have low access to grocery stores. These areas parallel the redlined neighborhoods from almost 100 years ago. The limited investments in these areas from the past have impacted current availability and access to high-quality food options.

Home ownership

During the 1940s and 1950s, as many White, working-class families bought homes with a government-sponsored mortgage in new suburban areas, Black Americans were either precluded from securing these government-backed loans to buy a home or outright prohibited from buying one. When the Fair Housing Act passed in 1968, it removed many of the government regulations that had banned Black Americans from owning homes in the suburbs and predominantly White neighborhoods. Though the federal government eventually reversed its discriminatory policies precluding African Americans from securing loans and buying homes, Black Americans had already been sequestered into specific neighbors for at least a generation. The homes in these areas, though, were no longer affordable to many Black



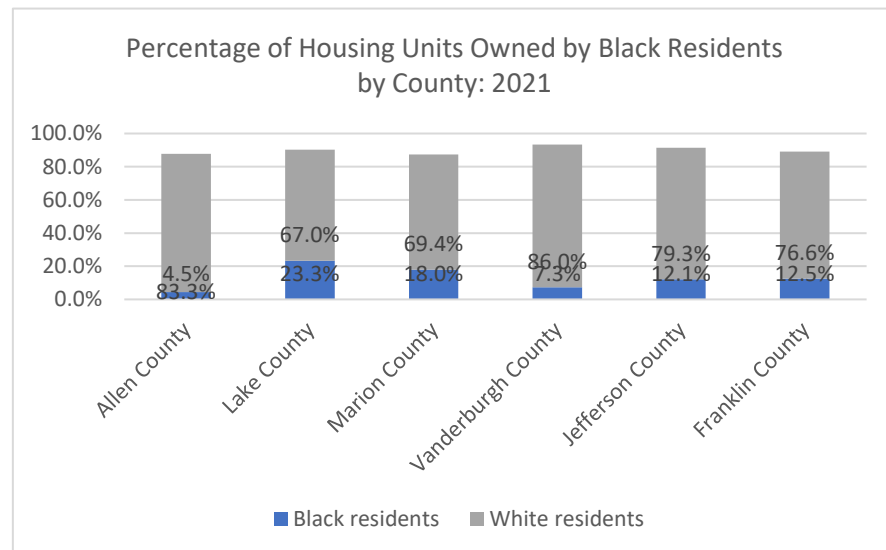
Source: ACS Table S2502

families.^{lx} In 2021, Marion County had 394,717 occupied housing units; 108,895 housing units occupied by African American residents, which comprised 27.6% of all the housing units.

- Of the 225,000 owned housing units, Black residents made up 18.0% of the owners – owning around 40,000 units throughout the county. The percentage of owned housing is disproportionate to the overall composition of

Black occupants in all housing units, since there is a 9-point difference.

- Comparatively, the percentage of housing units rented by African Americans in Marion County was almost thirteen points higher than the overall, again illustrating a negatively disproportionate trend.



Source: ACS Table S2502

- The ownership rate for Black residents in Marion County is higher than similar counties, except for Lake County, which has Black ownership

percentage of 23.2%.^{lxi}

In addition to lower rates of homeownership, Black-owned homes are often devalued in the housing market. Nationally, homes of similar quality in neighborhoods with similar amenities are worth 23% less in majority-Black neighborhoods (\$48,000 per home on average, amounting to \$156 billion in cumulative losses for Black Americans), compared to neighborhoods with very few or no Black residents.^{lxii} Based on 2018 data, about 23% of Marion County neighborhoods are predominately black. Forty-eight percent of Black Marion County residents lived in majority-Black neighborhoods. Additionally, majority- Black neighborhoods also had the largest concentration of Black homeownership.

However, Black-owned homes are routinely devalued in Marion County when compared to White-owned homes.

- The median home value in Marion County is \$129,200, though in the county’s majority Black neighborhoods, the value decreases to \$87,821 – a gap of more than \$41,000.
- When comparing the home values of majority-black neighborhoods to neighborhoods that are not majority-black, this gap grows to more than \$52,000.
- More than 88% of these neighborhoods have median home values lower than the county median, and almost 42% have median home values less than \$75,000.^{lxiii} Devaluing Black-owned homes depletes wealth generation and accumulation, thus negatively impacting the current and future quality of life for African Americans in Marion County.

Educational Attainment

Positive Data Trends

Leadership and Representation

One educational asset positively benefiting to the quality of life for African American residents in Marion County is the diversity of school leaders and teachers. Administrators play a key role in recruiting and retaining effective teachers, which, in turn, creates more positive learning environments and improves outcomes for students. The impact is especially apparent for administrators of color – teachers of color are more likely to stay at a school site where they share the same race/ethnicity as their principal. Based on a study to examine the impact that administrators of color have on teachers and students in schools across the LA region, leaders of color do have an impact on the teachers of color. Teachers of color are more likely to have job satisfaction and remain in their district if they share an administrator of the same race.^{lxiv} Diverse school leadership is associated with a greater likelihood of employing diverse teachers. Also, diversity among professional staff, including school counselors and administrators, is associated with improved test scores and reductions in absences in Maryland schools.

- In 2020-2021, 27.7% of all administrators in Marion County school districts (208 individuals) were Black. Administrators includes all assistant principals, principals, assistant superintendents, superintendents, and other district-level personnel.^{lxv}
- Additionally, one Marion County school district, Indianapolis Public Schools, has a Black Superintendent, Aleesia Johnson.
- Though it is positive that a quarter of Marion County’s school administrators are Black, the percentage of Black administrators does not reflect the diversity in the student population – 38.5% of Marion County’s students are African American. While the current level of diversity can be celebrated, there is still room for improvement.

In 2020-2021, 2,756 teachers (4.1%) across Indiana were Black. The Indiana Department of Education did not provide teacher data by county and race for the most recent years. However, in 2019, Marion County had the second highest percentage of teachers of color (17.2%) with Lake County having the highest percentage (24.8%). Allen County had 6.2%, and Vanderburgh had 3.9%.^{lxvi}

- Teacher diversity is highly correlated with improved academic performance and school culture for students of color. National research has found that for students of color, having a teacher of the same race or ethnicity may increase test scores and reduce the likelihood of disciplinary issues.

- Students of color also benefit from higher teacher expectations and from seeing members of their own race/ethnicity as role models in positions of authority.
- Further, research has shown that when a school prioritizes diversity and strives to create authentic cultural change, the quality of both teaching and learning improves, benefitting everyone.^{lxvii}
- Minority students often perform better on standardized tests, have improved attendance, and are suspended less frequently (which may suggest either different degrees of behavior or different treatment, or both) when they have at least one same-race teacher.^{lxviii}
- More recent evidence adds a variety of other student benefits to this list: Increased exposure to same-race teachers is also associated with improvements in course grades, students' grit and interpersonal self-management, their working memory, and the likelihood of taking an advanced math course.
- Not only do students of color benefit from teacher diversity, but White students benefit too. For White students, a diverse learning environment provides exposure to different perspectives and can improve their ability to problem solve, think critically, and develop creativity. Furthermore, diverse teachers can increase White students' civic engagement and foster cognitive, social, and emotional benefits.^{lxix}

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Of the 14,053 students in Marion County that were in a designated CTE pathway in 2021, 5,644 students (40.2%) were Black. Because participation in a CTE pathway has been shown to have positive effects of students' employment and earning potential in the short run, the access to and utilization of these pathways by Black students may have a positive impact on the Black community.^{lxx} Listed below are the top ten CTE pathways based on Black students' participation. Though there is high participation from Black students in CTE, one area that could be improved for African American students' participating in CTE pathways is the type of pathway. Though several are designated as high-wage, high-demand career areas by the state of Indiana, the top 2 pathways Black students participate in have historically low pay and career sustainability.^{lxxi, lxxii}

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Culinary | 60.4% |
| Food service | 59.3% |
| Early childhood development | 50.4% |
| Nursing | 47.0% |
| Fire and rescue | 44.0% |
| Health | 40.8% |
| Computer science | 39.6% |
| Physical therapy | 36.2% |
| Engineering | 38.5% |
| Networking | 34.8% |

Source: Governor's Workforce Cabinet

One additional area of positive data is the overall percentage of Black students earning certifications in Marion County. Of the 689 students that earned a certification in 2021, nearly one-third (211 students; 30.6%) were Black. The earned certification of Black students is nearly proportionate to the percentage of students in CTE pathways. Similar to CTE pathway participation, certifications earned by Black students trend towards lower paying jobs with low levels of stability and sustainability. Below are the top ten certifications and career pathway earned by Black students in Marion County schools.^{lxxiii}

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| RAEF (Food Industry) | 65.6% |
|----------------------|-------|

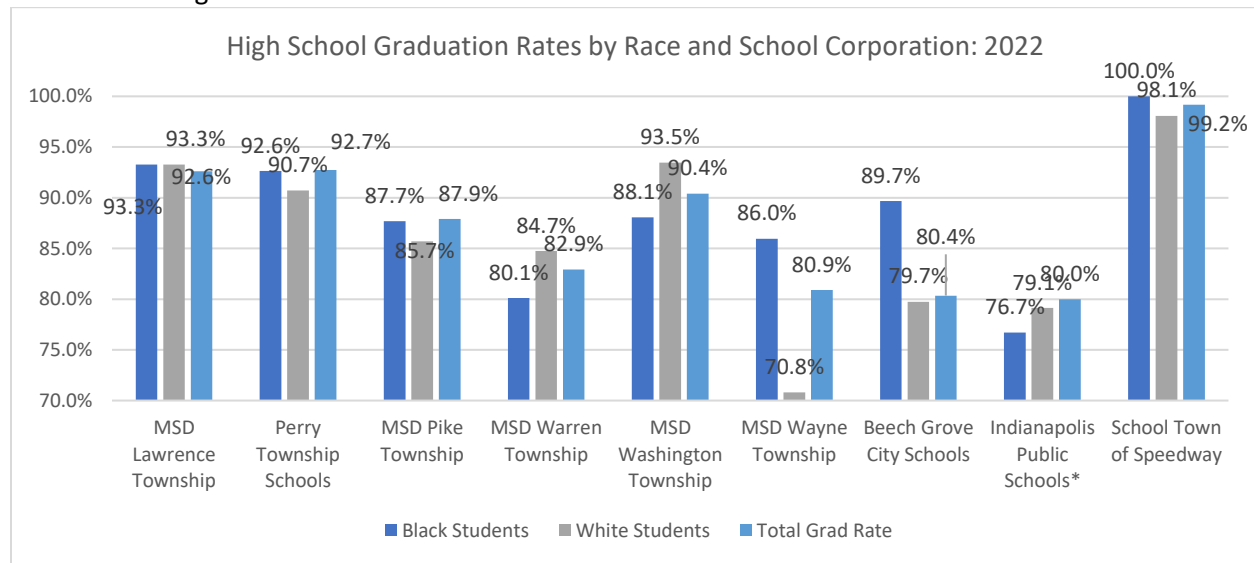
| | |
|--|-------|
| NCCER Core Curriculum (Construction) | 56.5% |
| State Nursing License Health) | 41.1% |
| NCCER (Construction) | 39.4% |
| SERVS (Food Industry) | 34.6% |
| ASE Collision Repair/Damage Repair (Automobiles) | 39.1% |
| State Cosmo License (Cosmetology) | 23.1% |
| ASE Auto & Light Truck Engine Repair (Automobiles) | 19.4% |
| EMR First Responder (Fire and rescue) | 18.2% |
| ASE Auto & Light Truck Suspension & Steering (Automobiles) | 14.7% |
| ASE Auto & Light Truck Brakes (Automobiles) | 12.0% |

Source: Governor's Workforce Cabinet

High School Graduation Rate

Out of the 2022 cohort of 3,450 Black students across Marion County, 2,935 students graduated. This is an overall grad rate of 85.1% for Marion County's Black students.

- This was less than three points from White students' grad rate of 87.8%.
- In several school corporations, such as Perry Township Schools, MSD Lawrence Township, MSD Pike Township, MSD Wayne Township, Beech Grove City Schools, and School Town of Speedway, Black students had a graduation rate at or higher than White students and the overall graduation rate.^{lxiv}



Source: Indiana Department of Education⁷

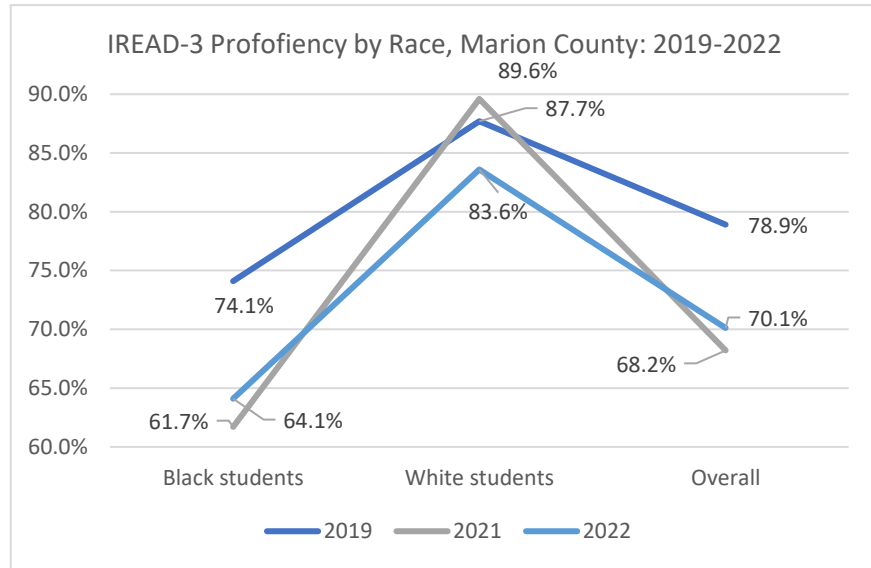
⁷ Indianapolis Public Schools totals include Herron High School, Riverside High School, Purdue PolyTech IND, Christel House South, Hope Academy, and Phalen Virtual Leadership Academy.

Potentially Challenging Issues

IREAD-3 Proficiency

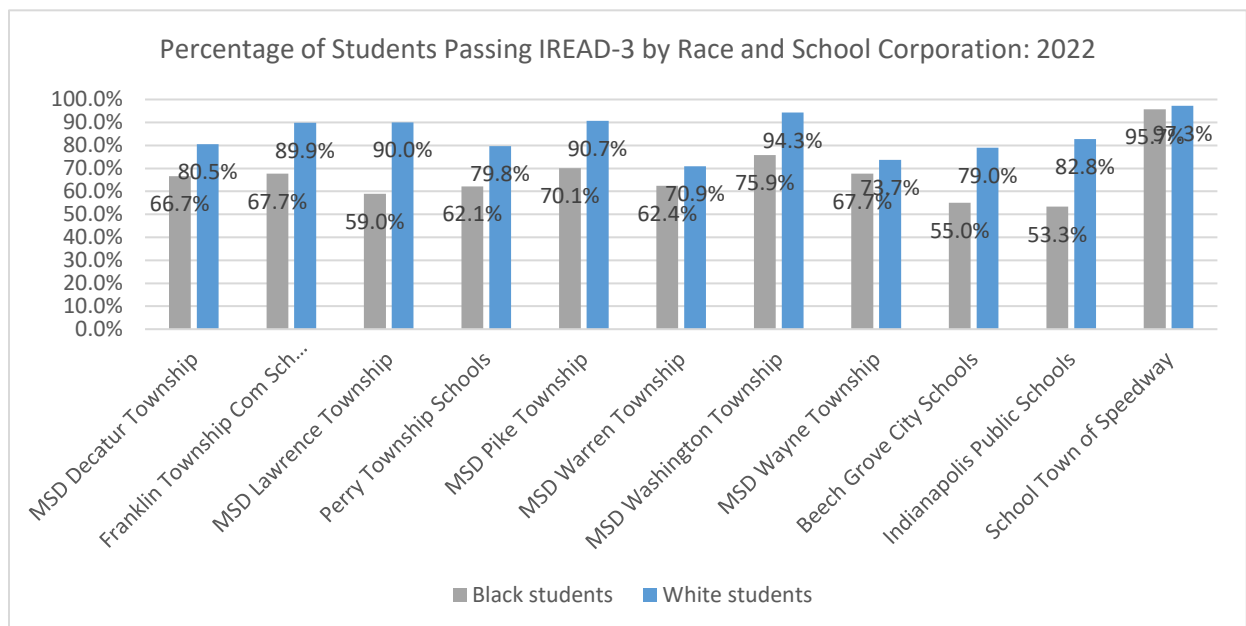
A child's third grade reading level correlates with future educational performance. Early literacy has a significant relationship with academic success, graduation rates, and chances of succeeding economically later in life. Students who are performing above grade-level in third grade graduated high school and attended college at higher rates than their peers who were performing at or below grade level. Nationally, more than 8 in 10 students who failed to earn a high school diploma were struggling readers in third grade. While these struggling readers account for about a third of students across the nation, they represent more than three-fifths of those who eventually drop out or fail to graduate on time.^{lxv}

- Over the last three administrations of IREAD-3 in Marion County, Black students' reading proficiency was lower than both the overall and White students' reading proficiency.
- Additionally, the proficiency rates of African American students have not recovered since 2020 and the learning loss caused by COVID disruptions.



Source: Indiana Department of Education

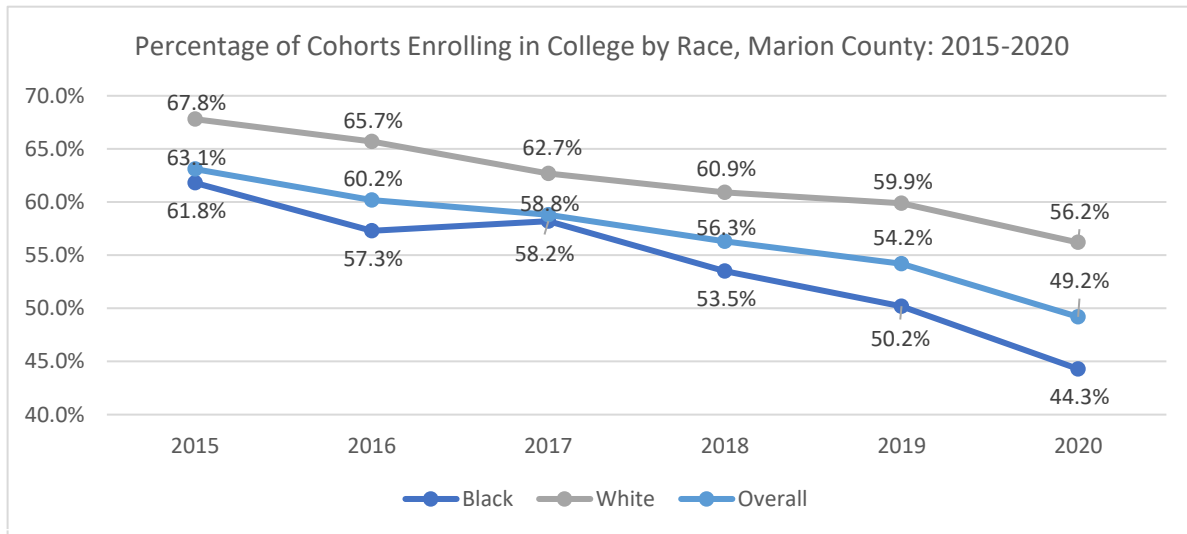
- When examining the percentage of Black students who passed IREAD-3 by school corporation, only the School Town of Speedway had comparable proficiency rates between its Black and



White students. All other school corporations in Marion County saw significant gaps between the populations.^{lxxvi}

Enrollment in College

- In 2020, 1,656 Black students enrolled in college immediately after high school, which was 44.3% of the graduating cohort. This percentage was about 5 percentage points lower than the overall higher education enrollment for Marion County and almost 12 points lower than that of White students.
- The percentage of Marion County students enrolling in college right after high school has been decreasing since 2015. The percentage of Black students enrolling has had the largest decrease (17.5- point decrease) when compared to White students (11.6-point decrease) and the overall enrollment of Marion County students (13.9-point decrease).^{lxxvii}
- Research has not determined the exact cause behind the decrease in enrollment, though lower student achievement, economic pressures, and the rising cost of higher education could be contributing factor.



Source: Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Below are additional data indicators of early college success:

- 442 Black students in the 2020 cohort needed remediation during their first year in college – 29.8% of all students from Marion County; 17.3% of the 442 students earned remedial credits. The average percentage of students in Marion County required remediation was 18.4%, which was several 11.4 lower than Black students. The percentage of White students needing remedial courses was 11.1% – less than half of Black students.
- The average freshman GPA for African American students from Marion County was 2.1, which was lower than the average GPA for White students (2.7) and overall (2.5).
- Black students from the Marion County 2020 cohort earned on average 17.3 credits during their freshman year. This average was again lower than that of White (22.7 credits) and the overall average of all Marion County students (20.4 credit hours).^{lxxviii}

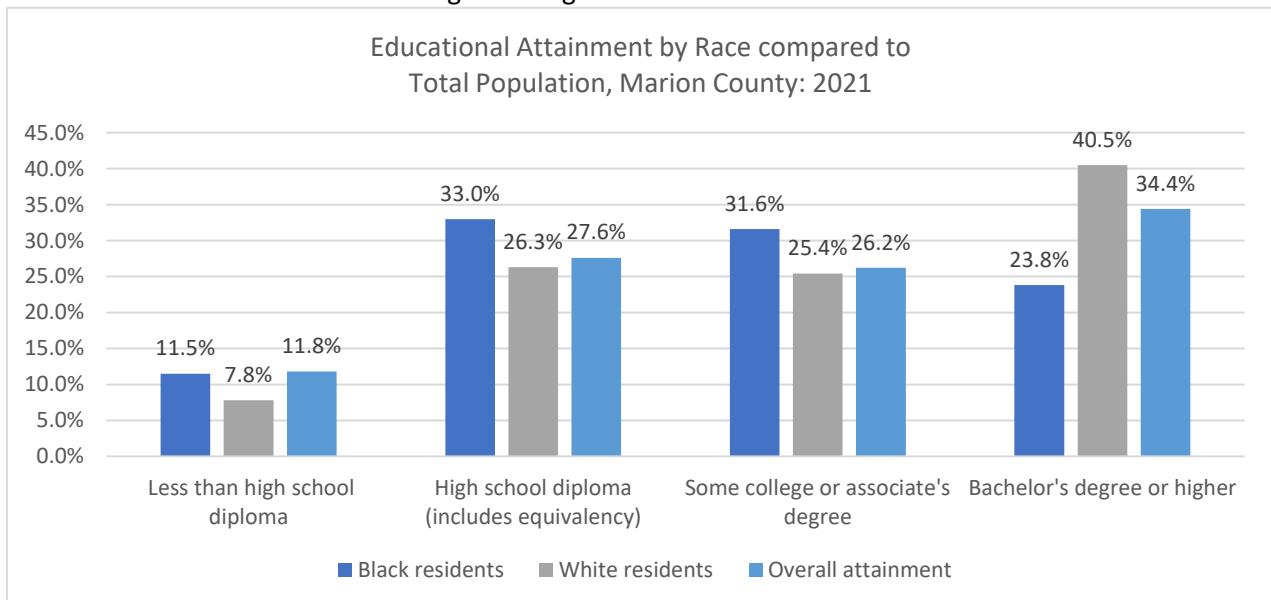
Educational Attainment

When comparing the levels of educational attainment of Black residents 25-years-old and older to the whole Marion County African American community (e.g., the number of Black individuals with at a

specific educational level compared to all Black residents), nearly two-thirds of Black residents have some college or an associate degree (31.9%) or a high school diploma or equivalency (31.6%); 25.7% of African Americans in Indianapolis have less than a high school diploma; and 18.2% of Black residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. African American women tend to comprise the majority of those with higher levels of educational attainment. Over 25,000 Black women living in Marion County have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is 10,000 more people than Black men.^{lxxix}

When examining the proportion African Americans comprise compared to Marion County's overall educational attainment rate (e.g., the number of Black individuals with a high school diploma compared to all individuals with a high school diploma) there are some bright spots within the data in addition to some potentially challenging issues.

- 11.8% of Marion County residents have less than a high school diploma. The percentage of those with less than a high school diploma that are Black is slightly less than the overall percentage of all Marion County residents, though it is still higher than that of White residents.
- The percentages of those with only a high school diploma or some college/an associate's degree that are Black are higher than those with similar educational attainment that are White residents, which is both positive and negative. The positive aspect of these data is that Black residents have some a degree indicating a level of academic proficiency and success. The negative facet is that these two percentages are higher than those of White residents because White individuals comprise a larger swath of the population with a bachelor's degree or higher.
- One of every 4 Marion County residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is Black. Nearly half of those with a bachelor's degree or higher are White.^{lxxx}



Source: ACS C15002

Conclusion

As the data in the previous sections illustrate, the African American community in Marion County have profound assets and significant challenges. The conclusion of this report will highlight: 1) potential strategies to address the challenges, 2) existing programs to scale within the community or throughout the County, and 3) lingering questions to be addressed.

Community

The following are potential strategies for IAAQLI and other community-based organizations working with or on behalf of the African American community to consider as ways to address the pervasive racial segregation of Marion County's neighborhoods and schools:

- Develop a better understanding of Indiana Civil Rights Law (IC 22-9) in traditional and charter schools and fair housing laws (IC 22-9.5);
- Consider school policies that may encourage or limit more integrated classrooms, such available academic opportunities;^{lxxxix}
- Recruit partners or other community-business organizations from across sectors, including resident groups, the media, and business leaders to create buy-in, generate, and elevate insight, and support desegregation efforts;
- Leverage local leaders to build voice and power within traditionally underrepresented or disenfranchised communities;
- Reframe inclusion as integral to growth to encourage progress in both areas as a growing body of evidence suggests that diversity and inclusion are catalysts for economic development; and
- Advocate for and adopt policies and programs to promote and support inclusion in education, housing, economic development, and fiscal policy.^{lxxxii}

Health

Because health outcomes are closely correlated with other social determinants of health (such as economic outcomes, educational attainment, and access to clean, affordable housing), many of the potential solutions offered in other sections may also boost outcomes. However, there are several lingering health-related questions IAAQLI, its partners, and other community-based organizations may want to research further.

- While it is positive that 9 out of every 10 Black residents in Indianapolis has health insurance, data are not provided at the county and racial levels about the type of health insurance. One area for additional research may be determining the type of health insurance (e.g., private or employer-based, health marketplace, or government sponsored, such as Medicaid, Medicare, or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)).
- IAAQLI, its partners, and other community-based organizations serving Black residents may consider collecting additional data on if and how Black residents are utilizing available mental health resources in the county. Additionally, it may be helpful to determine where mental health resources and providers are in Marion County. It is probable that many of the resources may not be readily accessible to residents in Black neighborhoods.
- Another issue for IAAQLI, partner organizations, and, specifically, state and local health agencies to consider addressing is the dearth of county and race specific data about the mental health needs and issues of residents. Though national- and state-level can serve as a proxy to understand the mental health conditions of Indianapolis' Black community, these data lack local specificity and nuance. Government agencies can work with IAAQLI and other organizations serving the Black community to collect, report, and address mental health issues for this constituency – especially given the correlation between mental health, substance abuse, and suicide and homicide rates.

In addition to addressing the gaps in health data identified above, IAAQLI and other partners either working on mental health issues or working with the Black community can consider leveraging the following strategies to ensure access to help and treatment for those struggling with their mental health:

- Implement cultural competency trainings for current and future providers to negate potential cultural or implicit bias or stereotypes. Two cultural competency training specifically for working with Black individuals that Mental Health America recommends are the [Boris Lawrence Henson Foundation](#), [Black Mental Health Alliance](#), and [BEAM](#) (Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective).
- Create, leverage, and promote databases for those seeking mental health treatment from Black providers. Though community-based organizations could create a database for Indianapolis specifically, organizations could also leverage and promote two national databases – [Therapy for Black Girls](#), [Therapy for Black Men](#), [Melanin and Mental Health](#), and the organizations above – to the Black community in Marion County. [Black Men Heal](#) and the [Loveland Foundation](#) provide financial resources and assistance to those seeking mental health help, in addition to access to Black providers.
- Address the stigma of seeking treatment within the community. Because stigma is such a significant barrier for many Black individuals to seek mental health treatment, implementing strategies and resources to decrease the stigmatization of mental health issues and therapy. Faith in Indiana’s Black Youth Collective (which advocates for more mental health awareness in Indianapolis) and Safe Black Space (which addresses individual and community reactions to cultural and racial trauma) are a local and national resource that can be promoted and scaled throughout the County to help reduce the stigma associated with mental health.
- Help promulgate school-based mental health services and family engagement around these services. Starting July 2020, Indiana legislation requires school corporations and charter schools to enter into a memorandum of understanding with a community mental health center or a mental health provider certified or licensed by the state. In addition to increasing the number and effectiveness of school-based health centers throughout Marion County’s schools, IAAQLI and other organizations can help these centers engage with students’ families. Research in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that Black kids who were connected to school-based mental health services reported that their family members supported them, their emotional and psychological health, and their connections to those services in schools, whereas those kids who did not report that level of support from their families did not use those services.^{lxxxiii} It is important to have outreach to families both via ongoing communications and in-person meetings and events. IAAQLI and partners can help school and district leadership convey to families and the school community how important mental health supports are for kids who are in need of them.

Economic

To improve economic outcomes for the Marion County African American community, IAAQLI, partners in the business community, and other community-based organizations can consider the following strategies to augment the current positive data trends:

- Programs and business advice to small and medium-sized local businesses and entrepreneurs, including manufacturing extension services, small business development centers, centers to help businesses bid for federal procurement contracts, and entrepreneurial assistance programs that link entrepreneurs with available government and private resources;
 - Additionally, IAAQLI and other community-based organizations serving the Indianapolis African American community can work with, replicate, expand, and scale the initiatives mentioned above in the *Economic Growth* subsection to boost Black entrepreneurship and businesses;

- Job training oriented to employer needs, such as customized job training programs run by Ivy Tech Community College;
- Workforce outreach programs that reach out to lower-income neighborhoods and embed job placement and training services in neighborhood institutions, such as churches, housing projects, and community advocacy programs;
- Job retention programs that provide smaller employers with success coaches to increase job retention among recently hired workers from disadvantaged groups, such as linking these workers to services to deal with childcare or car repair.^{lxxxiv}

Mentoring programs are an effective way to reduce gaps that cross both racial and socioeconomic lines. In Marion County, there are several mentoring programs aimed at historically marginalized communities. These include:

- [100 Black Men of Indianapolis](#),
- [Starfish Initiative](#),
- [Indy Women in Tech](#),
- [Indy Achieves](#),
- [Urban Hope](#),
- [Big Brother Big Sisters of Central Indiana](#),
- [Circles Indianapolis](#), and
- [We Care Indy](#).

In addition to promoting these and other mentoring programs to the African American community, IAAQLI could encourage more Black adults to be mentors through these programs. Creating opportunities for Black adults to mentor Black youth could both strengthen the quality of life for the community and generate long-term positive outcomes.

One of Indy’s most prominent economic development programs is the Indy East Promise Zone (IEPZ), which began in 2015 as one of eight communities designated as a federal “Promise Zone” (a programmatic precursor to Opportunity Zones). IEPZ has five goal areas that shape their work:

- Live INDYEAST – To reduce resident turnover, demolish or renovate condemned and abandoned properties, eliminate lead hazards, offer repair subsidies for low-income homeowners, and develop affordable housing.
- Learn INDYEAST - To improve health outcomes and school readiness for infants and toddlers, family economic stability, parent engagement in their children’s learning, and cultural competency and racial equity in schools districtwide.
- Work INDYEAST - To remediate contamination and revive commerce on abandoned former industrial sites, improve the infrastructure that connects homes and jobs, encourage local entrepreneurship, and provide incentives to attract employers to the Near Eastside.
- Buy INDYEAST - To lay the groundwork for new commercial districts with an emphasis on arts-based community development.
- Safe INDYEAST- To expand access to workforce and entrepreneurship opportunities and have collaborated on several pilot projects focused on improving public safety through strategies centered on art and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. Additionally, pilot programs focused on mental health and addictions aid in developing strategies that can be replicated in other communities.^{lxxxv}

IAAQLI, partners in the business community and economic development, and other community-based organizations could learn from this model and adapt to other neighborhoods or Opportunity Zones throughout the county. Scaling similar programs may advance economic and community outcomes, thus leading to greater health outcomes and an improved quality of life.

Education

Given the importance teacher diversity for all students, school districts and community-based organizations throughout Marion County can create goals and strategies to increase both the recruitment and retention of Black teachers, administrators, and other school and district personnel. Strategies for IAAQLI and community-based organizations serving the African American community in Marion County to consider include:

- Capitalize upon the Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s existing scholarships of the Earline S. Rogers Student Teaching Stipend for Minorities and William A. Crawford Minority Teacher Scholarship to attract more African American students to the teaching profession;
- Collaborate with Marion County’s 11 school corporations to direct the federal funds they receive through Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or funds from Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) specifically to support the preparation, training, and recruitment of Black teachers and school leaders;
- Track and monitor recruitment and retention data and create intentional pipelines to administrative positions to expand accessibility for Black individuals.
- Work with families to build a welcoming school environment and uplift teachers of color by making sure to provide learning opportunities.^{lxxxvi}

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