



Blueprint for Change

Strategies to Improve the Quality of Life for
African Americans Living in Westchester County

July, 2024

Prepared for
The African American Advisory Board
of the County of Westchester

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Honorable George S. Latimer
Westchester County Executive
148 Martine Avenue
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Dear County Executive Latimer,

I am writing you on behalf of the African American Advisory Board (AAAB). We have been diligently working to address issues impacting people of African ancestry in Westchester County, using thoroughly researched data to make recommendations aimed at enhancing and promoting effective policies and services designed to improve their quality of life.

Our revised *Blueprint for Change* reflects an updated examination of four pillars: economic development, education, housing, health, and human services. This document provides a historical context for our examination and identifies social barriers that have impacted people of African ancestry. These findings are followed by our recommendations for corrective action designed to address structural barriers to the four pillars we examined.

This document reflects the AAAB's response to its mandate to bring to the attention of the County Executive and the Board of Legislators, issues impacting people of African ancestry who live in Westchester County. We are requesting your support and assurance that this document will be posted on Westchester County's web page and distributed to elected officials at all levels, key corporations, nonprofit, and faith-based leaders.

We would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to serve the county. We believe that our work is vital in insuring that the voices of people of African ancestry in Westchester County are heard, and their needs addressed.

In closing, we are hopeful and expectant that the implementation of the recommendations referred to in the *Blueprint for Change* document will serve to improve life for all citizens of Westchester County. We look forward to your support in this endeavor.


Barbara L. Edwards, Chair

Westchester County
African American Advisory Board

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Introduction

About the African American Advisory Board (AAAB)

The mission of the African American Advisory Board is to bring to the attention of the County Executive and the Board of County Legislators issues impacting people of African ancestry¹ who live in Westchester County. The AAAB provides information and assistance by identifying and resolving concerns affecting African Americans; working in partnership with other agencies; using thoroughly researched data; and making recommendations related to African American history, economic development, education, health and human services, and housing. AAAB's goal is to enhance diversity, inclusion, and equity through promoting effective policies, legislation, and services to eliminate all forms of discrimination. It is a volunteer body, comprised of individuals who live and/or work in Westchester County and who are dedicated to community service.

As the County Executive guides Westchester into a robust post-pandemic environment, the AAAB offers this report to document the quality of life for people of African ancestry living in the county of Westchester. It examines four aspects of the Westchester landscape: the economy, housing, education, and healthcare. AAAB hopes that this report will be of value as it works with the office of the County Executive to shape public policy for the people who live and work in Westchester County.

What is Inside this Second Edition

The first edition of *Blueprint for Change* documented the public conversations that took place at the *Blueprint for Change Summit*, held in spring 2010. AAAB sponsored this countywide event to initiate public dialogue on the challenges facing African Americans who

¹The label used to racially categorize former enslaved descendants of Africa has evolved over the centuries. Colored, Negroes, Black, African Americans have all been used to label Africans born and living in the US. In recognition of the many nationalities among Africans living in the US, new labels emerged to reflect the diversity within the Black community—African Caribbeans, Africans from the continent, Black and Brown people, and people of color are some of the labels used to describe this group. While Africans in the US may have many nationalities, our origin is embedded in the African continent. To acknowledge the various nationalities and its connection to Africa, AAAB chooses to use the label people of African ancestry.

live in Westchester and what might be done to resolve those challenges. In preparation for this public conversation, AAAB convened a series of focus groups comprised of leaders in the fields of economic development, housing, health and human services, and education.

Recommendations and proposed solutions from the focus groups were used at the summit to initiate a public conversation and generate consensus on the most significant challenges facing the African American community.

This second edition of *Blueprint for Change* is a continuation of the inquiry into the conditions under which people of African ancestry are living. Although people of African ancestry are exceeding the national average in select wealth indicators, in Westchester this group continues to be rated the lowest among all racial/ethnic groups on economic indicators for success. To offer insight into the causes for this persistent condition, the second edition of *Blueprint for Change* examines aspects of the Westchester economy in a search for structural barriers that impede the efforts of people of African ancestry from fully self-actualizing.

This new edition contains three sections. Part I provides a historical context within which to examine four areas important to AAAB—economic development, housing, education, and health and human services. Part II identifies social barriers that exist and the extent to which these barriers have impacted the lives of people of African ancestry. In Part III, we present findings and recommendations to serve as a roadmap for identifying public policies to address structural barriers in the system.

The National Context

We begin this new edition as Westchester County emerges from one of the worst global pandemics to hit the nation in over two centuries. The New York State economy went into a free fall in late March 2020 soon after former Governor Andrew Cuomo issued an executive order shutting down all non-essential operations in the entire state. Every sector in the economy felt the impact of this global pandemic. Tourism and entertainment, private sector businesses, and not-for-profit services were all under siege as the unemployment rate reached 14.2%. Faced with unprecedented budget deficits, state and local governments were unable to do much in the way of helping the economy withstand this government-induced shutdown. Consistent with what was taking place throughout the nation, Westchester County, the second

largest economy in New York State, fell into a downward free fall. By the end of 2021, an estimated 1,400 people in Westchester had died from the COVID-19 virus (Westchester County Association, 2020).

The pandemic was not just a major health and economic crisis for Westchester and the entire nation; it exposed serious structural barriers within the healthcare system, which impeded some of the most vulnerable and economically challenged communities from being protected from this deadly virus. These inequities for the most part fell along racial lines. While the pandemic posed a threat to the stability of the county, it also created the opportunity to come together and rethink how we can create an environment where people, regardless of their race, gender, or economic status, can meaningfully participate in Westchester's society.

Purpose of the Report

This second edition of *Blueprint for Change* examines the state of people of African ancestry living in Westchester and their quality of life in one of the wealthiest counties in the nation. We examined structural barriers that impede their ability to be meaningfully engaged in Westchester's society. Specifically, we examined the extent to which people of African ancestry have gained access to the Westchester economy, its network of healthcare services, quality housing, and access to the county's network of high performing K-12 public school systems. We discovered that while progress has been made in some areas, most people of African ancestry are impacted by structural barriers that impede their efforts to fully self-actualize, offer their talents to society, and enjoy the benefits and opportunities Westchester has to offer. This report is a contribution to the literature on public policy designed to create a fair and equitable society for all people in Westchester regardless of their racial, ethnic, or economic condition.

Creating the Report

To ascertain the extent to which people of African ancestry are meaningfully involved in Westchester society, we drew from existing reports prepared by the Westchester County Department of Planning, the Department of Health, and other county departments, and various departments in the New York State and federal government. In addition, we drew upon reports from national, state, and local not-for profit organizations; public and private foundations; the

Westchester County Association; other private sector/business organizations; national research centers; and local, regional, and state media outlets. Some of the databases we searched included the NYS School Report Card, U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. When conducting our analyses, we depended on local and state sources related to Westchester County.

Explanation of Data and Terms

While we were successful in locating data specific to Westchester for three economies we examined—housing, education, and healthcare, we were unable to locate local data on the Westchester economy from a racial/socioeconomic perspective. The lack of transparency on race and the presence of structural barriers that exist within a local economy along racial lines is not unique to Westchester. The lack of transparency on issues around race and its impact on the U.S. workforce is an issue throughout the country. In lieu of drawing from local data, we drew upon national databases to find independent research on barriers in the U.S. economy that impact people of African ancestry. National trends are often a microcosm of what is taking place on the local level. Findings we discovered provided context within which to speculate on the potential structural barriers present in Westchester County and the extent to which people of African ancestry are meaningfully engaged in its economies.

In addition, several of the reports were based on different timeframes. For example, we examined reports that spanned 3 to 5 years, while others were conducted during different calendar years—2019, 2022, or 2023. This has resulted in discrepancies in some of the data points. For example, if the median income for a particular area varied slightly, we provided the data as represented in the sources we used.

Finally, readers might be confused by the various terminologies used to describe different ethnic and racial groups. For example, in the NYS School Report Card, students of African ancestry are described as *Black or African American*; Schaeffer (2023) uses the term *Black*; Gallagher McAnaw (2022) refers to people of African ancestry as *Non-Hispanic Blacks*. Other sources use the term *Black and Brown people* to describe Black, Latino, and other recognized disenfranchised groups. As we have indicated, the AAAB uses the term *people of African ancestry* to describe the Black population. While we attempt to honor AAAB's preferred

use, we use all these terms interchangeably throughout the manuscript. Use of the term *Latino/Hispanic* is used interchangeably with *Hispanic* or *Non-White Hispanic*. Some sources integrate *American Indian* or *Alaska Native* with *Asian* or *Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander* and some keep them separate. In these instances, we use the source's terminology.

Executive Summary

Westchester is in close proximity to New York City and other major economic centers in the New York, New Jersey, and tri-state area. It has a reputation for excellent and well-funded public schools and public libraries, rich housing stock, and a high-quality healthcare system. These features make Westchester a magnet for people interested in living and working in the NY region. Westchester County's 450 square miles are comprised of breathtaking landscapes surrounded by the Hudson River, Rockland County, and Long Island Sound. Home to several Fortune 500 companies and families with some of the highest incomes in the region, Westchester continues to reign as one of the wealthiest counties in the country (Westchester County Department of Planning, 2010).

Westchester also has an impressive Black middle class, dating back to the early 20th century. Soon after the 1935 riots in Harlem, Black doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, entertainers, and other professionals moved to Westchester, establishing a strong Black middle class (Graham, 2008). Today, this county continues to attract and maintain a strong Black middle class consisting of representatives from the NYS Senate and Assembly, elected and appointed local government officials, entertainers, nationally renowned clergy, education administrators, judges, lawyers, physicians, and executive leaders in public and private sector organizations. The state of people of African ancestry is sound when comparing this group to the national average. For example, according to the Black Wealth Data Center (2023), in 2021, the median value for a house of a Black homeowner in Westchester was \$584,000 in comparison to the national median value of \$269,000. In 2021, the median household income was \$69,000 for Blacks in Westchester versus the national median income of \$46,000. The poverty rate was 15% versus the national poverty rate of 22%. The attainment of a 4-year college degree for Black Americans in Westchester was 35% versus the national median attainment level of 23%.

Despite people of African ancestry exceeding the nation in select wealth indicators, they continue to be among the poorest residents in Westchester County. For example, economic indicators for Westchester residents show people of African ancestry in the weakest position,

economically, among all racial groups in the county. Between 2016 and 2022, on average they had the lowest household median income (\$64,124), the highest unemployment rate (7.5%), the highest poverty rate (15%), and the highest rate of homelessness (21%). In addition, among all racial groups in the county, they have the lowest rate of homeownership and business ownership (37%) and (3%), respectively (Westchester Community Foundation, 2022).

Data informs us that while people of African ancestry in Westchester might be doing better than the national average, their potential for meaningful engagement in Westchester has not been maximized. This report identifies structural barriers that have impeded the ability of this group from fully participating in the Westchester's society.

Key Findings

We present the four major barriers we believe have had the greatest impact on families of African ancestry.

1. People of African ancestry are underrepresented in many industries and they are subjected to occupational segregation. As a result, they are not meaningfully engaged in the economy and the potential for upward mobility is limited.

Findings from our national inquiry reveal that while people of African ancestry represent 12.5% of the total U.S. workforce, they are grossly underrepresented in major industries. Those who were active in the workforce were overrepresented in labor intensive, lower-paying occupations and underrepresented in management and other occupations that generate higher levels of compensation. While these findings represent a national perspective, they are relevant to Westchester.

2. There are four impediments for people of African ancestry having access to affordable and racially well-balanced housing in Westchester. They include, out-of-reach housing costs, limited geographic housing options, exclusionary zoning laws, resistance among municipalities to build affordable housing, and enforcement of fair housing laws in their communities.

People of African ancestry are subjected to the high costs of rental and homeownership housing. Based on HUD's Cost Burden Analysis, an average of 48.5% of rental households and

40% of homeownership households are classified by HUD as having housing costs that are unaffordable or severely unaffordable.

In addition to out-of-reach housing costs, people of African ancestry are living under extreme segregated housing conditions in Westchester County. For example, although this group represents 17% of Westchester's population, 77% live in five of the six central cities, with the vast majority (57%) living in Mount Vernon and Yonkers. Limited geographic options make it difficult for people of African ancestry to move into municipalities beyond the central cities. Among 71% of Westchester's towns and villages, people of African ancestry comprise less than 5% of the residents in these municipalities.

3. Because public schools are funded largely by property taxes, a two-tier system for the delivery of services to children continues to exist—one serving resource-rich school districts catering to families in wealthy, high-income communities, and another system, serving resource-poor school districts catering to families in lower income communities.

Our findings revealed major disparities in school districts located in poor communities. For example, in school calendar year 2021-2022, there was a \$4,023 gap in per-pupil spending for children in poor communities and there were significant gaps in student test scores on state standardized exams, ranging from 20% to 46% lower than students attending schools in more wealthy communities.

4. Westchester's ratings for producing favorable health outcomes for its residents is above New York and above the national average. Despite Westchester's distinction, the lifespan and health outcome scores for people of African ancestry are significantly lower than the general population and all other racial groups.

Westchester County is recognized as a place where the healthiest people reside. The county ranks among the top counties in the New York State for producing favorable healthcare outcomes among its residents. While Westchester ranked above New York and above the national average for producing favorable health outcomes for its residents, health outcome scores for people of African ancestry were significantly lower. For example, their life span was 78.8 years versus 82.4 years for the general population. Among the 60 measurements for

various health conditions, 47 measurements showed the state of health among people of African ancestry was worse than all other racial groups in Westchester County.

Part I: An Overview of Westchester County

A Snapshot of the Westchester Economy

When we examined the Westchester economy, it was evident that important sectors were positioned to realize a major economic boom in the healthcare, heavy construction, and commercial and residential real estate industries. By the end of 2022, the unemployment rate for Westchester was averaging 2.6%, the lowest on record for the county. In addition, 25,979 new positions were added to the labor force (Albert & Fiore, 2023). This record-level low unemployment rate was sparked by federal and state investment in local economies. For example, Westchester benefitted from the \$13 billion NYS received from the \$1.2 trillion federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed by Congress in 2021 (Biden, 2022). This enabled NYS to partner with local municipalities to fuel its economies (Albert & Fiore, 2023). In the next sections we describe the state of five major industries in the Westchester economy—healthcare, energy and climate, heavy construction, real estate, and the not-for-profit sectors.

An Examination of the Healthcare Industry in the Aftermath of COVID-19

In 2020, healthcare executives had to shift their focus to respond to the growing number of COVID-related cases and help to administer more than 2.5 million vaccinations. During this shift, other healthcare needs were neglected. For example, at White Plains Hospital, cancer screening declined by 90% in the spring and summer of 2020. Colorectal screening declined by 85%, prostate cancer screening decreased by 74%, and lung cancer screening dropped by 56%. These reductions had devastating effects on local healthcare facilities struggling to maintain staff and their commitment to preventative services for people who live and work in the region (Cary & Pofeldt, 2022).

As the pandemic began to subside in 2021, executives from major healthcare institutions were optimistic about surviving in a post-pandemic environment. One indicator for their optimism was the increasing number of non-COVID related patients showing up in emergency rooms across the county and the decline in the number of patients needing hospitalization for COVID-related illnesses. These trends enabled healthcare executives to redirect their attention to the needs of their institutions. For example, to address the staffing

challenges brought on by the pandemic, New York Presbyterian planned to partner with Iona University to establish a talent pipeline for new employees to enter the healthcare system. New York Presbyterian also planned to open a new labor-and-delivery suite at Lawrence Hospital in 2023. In 2021, White Plains Hospital opened its new Center for Advanced Medicine & Surgery and a new cardiac surgery program, in partnership with Montefiore Medical Center (Cary & Pofeldt, 2022). Westchester Medical Center Health (WMCHealth) announce its plans to open a new 128-bed facility in Valhalla, NY in 2025. These investments showed promise for a robust economy in the healthcare industry (Adler, 2023).

The shortage of workers in the healthcare economy has been a long-term crisis in Westchester. It only worsened during the pandemic. By 2023, the industry posted 6,000 openings for healthcare positions and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, job growth in the healthcare industry will increase by 15% over the next 10 years (Pfeffer, 2023). Despite the challenges, the future for the healthcare industry is promising.

The Energy Climate Industry

Public policy initiated by the NYS government has created a tremendous opportunity to expand the energy and climate industry. Advocates have been successful in convincing public policy officials to address climate change taking place in NYS, the nation, and in countries throughout the global community. For example, prior to the pandemic, in 2016, New York's Clean Energy Standard (CES) was established to fight climate change, reduce harmful air pollution, and ensure a supply of low-carbon energy (New York State, (n.d.)).

In 2020, CES was expanded to meet the requirements of the New York Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act). Hailed as the most comprehensive and ambitious clean energy goal in the history of New York State, the Climate Act was designed to revolutionize the way in which energy is used to operate various modes of transportation, and as a new source for heating homes and using electricity. The overall goal of the Climate Act is to achieve 70% renewably sourced electricity by 2030 and a zero-emission electric grid by 2040. Focusing on these new sources of energy have served as a catalyst for investment, economic development, and jobs to New York State. For example, in October 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul announced \$1 billion in public and private investments in renewable energy

projects. This represented the largest state investment in the nation's offshore wind blade and nacelle manufacturing facilities in the Capital Region (New York State, 2023).

As the energy landscape for NYS evolves, Westchester is positioned to build upon its success in attracting new investors, businesses, and jobs to the county. For example, several clean energy employers have already moved their businesses to the county—Sunrise Solar, Quest Solar, Sun Blue Energy, and Brightcore Energy are among the new energy groups currently operating in Westchester (Roach, 2022). As the second largest economy in the state, Westchester is positioned to benefit from the \$1 billion in state investments in renewable energy to expand this new local economy. In addition, the county will also benefit from the \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act approved by voters in 2022. These funds will support other improvements aimed at preserving natural resources and creating an estimated 84,000 jobs (Ross, 2023).

Potential Boom in the Heavy Construction Industry

The heavy construction business in Westchester was badly impacted during the early stage of the pandemic. At the onset of the government-imposed shutdown, New York State lost 44,400 construction jobs with half of the losses occurring in the downstate region—New York City, Westchester, Rockland, and Orange counties. Because New York City was the nation's epicenter for the COVID outbreak, the downstate region was disproportionately impacted. For example, the employment rate for construction workers in the downstate region declined by 13% in 2020 compared with a decline of 1.7% for the rest of the state. Unlike other businesses, the heavy construction industry did not experience a long-term economic free fall. While there was an initial collapse at the start of the pandemic, by the end of the fiscal year, the heavy construction industry stabilized. A large portion of the industry's portfolio consisted of clients in the pharmaceutical, healthcare, and utility industries. These companies were classified as *essential*, and as a result, they were exempt from the governor's executive order. These essential-service businesses became a source of income for the heavy construction industry and provided the sector with economic stability throughout the duration of the shutdown (Levine,2022).

As we move forward in this new post-pandemic environment, experts predict an economic boom in the coming years. The availability of funds from the Biden stimulus package is proving lucrative for the heavy construction industry as more requests for bids become available from the Department of Transportation and other governmental agencies. Employment for this industry is at 100% capacity (Levine, 2022).

In addition to the anticipated growth in the heavy construction industry, sparked by Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, Westchester County will also benefit from the \$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act approved by its voters in 2022. These funds will support other improvements aimed at preserving natural resources and creating an estimated 84,000 jobs. One example of how investing in environmental infrastructure sparks new job opportunities for workers across New York State is the South Fork Wind Renewal Energy Farm, 35 miles off the Long Island coast. This is one of five wind farms planned for development with funding from the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). These farms will generate 10,000 new jobs for workers throughout the state. The potential for increases in job opportunities is promising for Westchester's existing and new workforce (Ross, 2023).

The Real Estate Industry Perseveres Despite Facing Major Challenges

Westchester has always been a place of choice for businesses and residents interested in relocating to the New York metropolitan area. The city of New York is recognized as the largest economic engine in the state and is among those cities with the largest economies in the world. For example, New York is recognized as the finance capital in the global economy, a place with a highly talented and creative workforce and a place where innovation is an essential part of the city's social and economic fabric. In addition, New York is recognized for its tourism and entertainment industry, attracting visitors from around the globe. Because of its proximity to New York and its access to a network of highways and public transportation systems, Westchester's commercial and residential real estate industries performs well in the New York regional economy (Westchester County Association, 2020). While there continue to be challenges for Westchester's commercial and residential real estate markets to regain their pre-pandemic performances, forecast for future growth is strong for both industries (Berdon LLP, 2022).

Westchester's Commercial Real Estate Industry

Westchester's comeback in the office leasing market has been mixed. In 2021, the county's leasing activity was consistent with the pre-pandemic 5-year average (2 million square feet). By year-end the commercial office market closed on a high with the demand for space reaching 153,759 square feet—a reduction in the overall availability rate to 25.1%—slightly lower (25.7%) than the previous quarter (Berdon LLP, 2022). In the first quarter of 2023, the office leasing market continued to experience a decrease in net occupancy. The reported net absorption rate was negative 37,127 square feet. Although leasing activity for the quarter increased by 52% from 2022, demand declined by 11% from the pre-pandemic 10-year average of 445,000 square feet. The availability remains stable and asking rents are up 7% from rates before the 2020 government-imposed shutdown (Newmark, 2023).

The retail space market continues to struggle from conditions stemming from the statewide shutdown. Fewer businesses are opting for office space as new technology enables employees to work from home or other locations outside of the traditional office space. The demand for retail space is also sluggish, as consumer purchasing is shifting from traditional retail stores and outlets to online shopping (Newmark, 2023). However, there are signs of improvement. For example, several retail leasing markets in Westchester realized higher availability rates. Greater Port Chester, Greater White Plains, Soundshore, and the Greater Route 22 corridor all realized a positive absorption rate for first quarter 2023. Despite its slow growth, experts believe the retail leasing market is headed in the right direction (RM Friedland, 2023).

Westchester's Residential Real Estate Market

Westchester continues to be a magnet for potential buyers. The county's open space, excellent public school system, and diverse housing stock nestled in small villages, towns, and urban centers make Westchester a desirable place to raise a family. The median sales price for a home in the first quarter of 2023 was \$760,000, up 4.8% during the same period in 2022. When comparing the median sales price in 2023 to the median sales price in the 2019 pre-pandemic period, the sales price increased by 25.6%. Despite this significant increase in property values, fewer houses were sold in 2023. The decline represented the lowest in 10

years. This scarcity of available homes has stymied the county's residential real estate sector performance. For example, while the median year-to-date sales price is up, the available inventory for housing in Westchester in the first quarter of 2023 is down 68% compared to the first quarter in 2019. Although low inventory and higher interest rates are slowing the growth of the residential real estate market, the demand remains strong and the case for an optimistic future is justified (Moment, 2023).

Not-for-Profit Sector

While we focused on five industries important to the Westchester economy, there are other economies which make a substantial contribution to the county. For example, mission-driven organizations provide a valuable service to the Hudson Valley region. They represent 7,700 not-for-profit organizations providing services in the areas of health, education, cultural, environmental, and other related mission-driven services. These organizations represent the foundation upon which the social fabric of Westchester is built. In addition, the combined network of mission-driven organizations in the Hudson Valley make it the largest non-government employer in the region, comprising an estimated 139,000 workers. Not-for-profit organizations generate an estimated \$16 billion in annual revenue and in 2018, held an estimated \$23 billion in total assets. Workers in this industry earned a combined \$7.4 billion in wages. This sector demonstrated a high level of resiliency during the pandemic. For example, while the percent change in employment by the private sector was 12% between 2019 and 2020, the 6% losses suffered by mission-driven organizations was at a significantly slower rate (New York Council of NonProfits and Hudson Valley Funders Network, 2022).

As the region emerges from the pandemic, not-for-profits will continue to be needed to support families in need of services from this important network of providers. There is a vulnerability to the stability of this sector, however. Wages in the not-for-profit sector are not competitive with other industries and as a result, it will become increasingly difficult to recruit and sustain a qualified workforce (New York Council of NonProfits, 2022).

In summary, President Biden's forecast on the U.S. economy is quite evident in the county of Westchester. The county is experiencing a high employment rate. Forecasts for the healthcare industry and heavy industrial construction industry are all favorable. Commercial

leasing and residential real estate continue to struggle but are showing signs of growth. As the county continues to stabilize from the pandemic, the not-for-profit industry will be vital in helping families recover from the long-term effects of the global pandemic. In addition, this sector is vital for restoring the social and cultural fabric of this great economy.

A Snapshot of Westchester’s Affordable Housing Market

In 2008, New York State ranked sixth among 50 states for having the highest percentage of renters and homeowners who are burdened with excessive housing costs. In 2017, the state ranked third in the nation (Office of the New York State Comptroller, 2019). In 2019, 38% of households in Westchester were comprised of rental housing (Department of Numbers, (n.d.-a) and 62% were comprised of homeowners (U.S. Department of Energy, 2022). Households living in either of these housing types struggled with the cost of housing. Increasing the inventory of affordable housing has been a challenge for county and local governments. Structural barriers that impede this effort include out of reach costs for housing, the struggle of dealing with an outdated housing stock, local resistance to the building of affordable housing, zoning laws, and resistance to enforcing existing fair housing laws. The next sections provide an overview of these barriers.

Out-of-Reach Housing Costs

Westchester holds the distinction of having the second highest sales price for a home (\$765,000) among all counties located in downstate New York urban and suburban areas and the highest among counties in downstate suburban areas (Redfin, 2023). (See Table 1 for sale prices in the downstate housing market—2023).

Table 1: Sales in the Downstate Housing Market—2023

County	Median Sales Price
Kings County	\$950,000
Queens County	\$680,000
Nassau County	\$725,000
Bronx County	\$599,000
Richmond County	\$665,000
Putnam	\$461,000
Westchester County	\$765,000
Suffolk County	\$595,000
Rockland County	\$627,000

Note. Adapted from *Westchester County New York Housing Market*, (2023) Redfin. <https://www.redfin.com/county/2004/NY/Westchester-County/housing-market>

Trends in the costs for rental housing in Westchester were on the rise between 2015 and 2019. For example, the median cost for rental housing in 2019 was \$1,604, higher than the median cost of \$1,309 for rentals in New York City (Department of Numbers, n.d.-a). (See Table 2 for real gross rent history for Westchester 2014 and 2019).

Table 2: Real Gross Rent History for Westchester 2014 and 2019)

Date	US Median	NYC Median	Westchester County Median	Westchester County Average
2019	\$1,097.00	\$1,309.00	\$1,604.00	\$1,567.00
2018	\$1,077.00	\$1,297.00	\$1,510.00	\$1,537.00
2017	\$1,043.00	\$1,264.00	\$1,554.00	\$1,533.00
2016	\$1,027.00	\$1,250.00	\$1,498.00	\$1,517.00
2015	\$1,017.00	\$1,244.00	\$1,478.00	\$1,473.00

Note. Adapted from U.S. Census 1990 as cited by Department of Numbers, n.d.-a: https://www.deptofnumbers.com/rent/new-york/westchester-county/#vacancy_rate

The vacancy rate in Westchester peaked in 2015 at 7.5%. Table 3 shows a steady decline in vacancy rate for Westchester from 2.77% in 2019 to -1.85% in 2022. It also shows how Westchester’s vacancy rate is significantly lower than vacancy rates in NYS and the US.

Table 3: Rental Vacancy Rate in Westchester County

	2019	1-Year Change	3-Year Change
United States	6.0%	- 0.18%	0.8%
New York City	4.00%	- 0.20%	-0.42%
Westchester County	2.77%	- 0.61%	- 1.85%

Note. Adapted from U.S. Census 2019 ACS Data as cited by Department of Numbers, (n.d.-b): https://www.deptofnumbers.com/rent/new-york/westchester-county/#vacancy_rate

Despite the high demand for housing in Westchester County, housing costs for homeownership and rental properties are out of reach for many people who live or who desire to live in this area. Guidelines from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) define affordable housing as households that pay no more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Households paying more than 30% are considered *cost burdened*. While Westchester draws consumers with some of the highest incomes, the high costs are out of reach for many households. To gain insight into household affordability within municipalities, Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (2019), examined the median household income in cities, towns, and villages as a percent of the county’s median. Findings reveal that among the six cities in Westchester, the city of Rye was the only city with a median household income for owner-occupied households higher than the county’s household median. The median income for renter-occupied households for the cities of Rye and White Plains was larger than the county’s median income for renters. (See Table 4 for median household income of owners and renters for cities.)

Table 4: Median Household Income of Owner and Renters-Cities

	Owner Occupied Households		Renter Occupied Households	
	Median Household Income	Median Household Income as a % of the County Median Income	Median Household Income	Median Household Income as a % of the County Median Income
Mount Vernon	\$89,392	70%	\$39,070	80%
New Rochelle	\$124,792	98%	\$47,158	97%
Peekskill	\$87,111	69%	\$36,453	75%
Rye	\$209,609	165%	\$78,750	162%
White Plains	\$119,953	94%	\$53,997	111%
Yonkers	\$95,353	75%	\$40,665	83%
Westchester County	\$127,152	100%	\$48,703	100%

Note. Reprinted from the Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, 2019, Westchester County Housing Needs Assessment, Pg. 63. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

This phenomenon was not limited to cities. It was prevalent in more wealthier villages. For example, among the 22 villages in Westchester, there were seven (33%) where the median household income for homeowners was at or below the county’s household median income of \$127,152. Among renters, there were five villages (20%) where the median household income was below the county’s median household income (Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, 2019). (See Table 5 for median household income for owner-occupied and renter-occupied household in villages).

Table 5: Median Household Income for Homeowner/Rental Households in Villages

	Owner Occupied Households		Renter Occupied Households	
	Median HH Income	Median HH Income as a % of the County Median Income	Median HH Income	Median HH Income as a % of the County Median Income
Ardsley	\$175,341	138%	\$72,085	148%
Briarcliff Manor	\$184,375	145%	\$53,669	110%
Bronxville	\$229,250	180%	\$128,125	263%
Buchanan	\$118,026	93%	\$60,250	124%
Croton on the Hudson	\$149,233	117%	\$52,439	108%
Dobbs Ferry	\$161,205	127%	\$90,333	185%
Elmsford	\$97,054	76%	\$70,559	145%
Hastings on the Hudson	\$149,152	117%	\$66,698	137%
Irvington	\$145,250	114%	\$43,287	89%
Larchmont	\$250,000	197%	\$109,432	225%
Mamaroneck	\$133,526	105%	\$59,954	123%
Mount Kisco	\$104,432	82%	\$51,523	106%
Ossining	\$97,330	77%	\$47,235	97%
Pelham	\$169,519	133%	\$75,833	156%
Pelham Manor	181,350	143%	\$108,222	222%
Pleasantville	\$135,481	107%	\$36,884	76%
Port Chester	\$101,192	80%	\$46,363	95%
Rye Brook	\$156,484	123%	\$72,125	148%
Scarsdale	\$250,000	197%	\$207,569	426%
Sleepy Hollow	\$124,118	98%	\$41,605	85%
Tarrytown	\$141,524	111%	\$89,766	184%
Tuckahoe	\$112,500	88%	\$62,762	129%
Westchester County	\$127,152	100%	\$48,703	100%

Note. Reprinted from the Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress. (2019). *Westchester County housing needs assessment*, p. 65. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

Among the 17 towns in Westchester, three municipalities—Ossining, Yorktown, and Somers—had homeowners with median household incomes below the county’s median household income. For renters, Bedford, Mount Pleasant, and Ossining were the only towns where the median household income was below the county’s median household income for renters (Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, 2019). Overall, an estimated 39% of all households living in rental or homeownership housing are burdened with excess housing costs (Westchester Community Foundation, 2022).

On the other end of the pendulum, the county continues to grapple with families without homes who are in search for housing in the county. In 2018, there were 15,264 households actively looking for affordable housing. Fifty-eight percent of those households lived in the county and 41% lived in counties throughout New York State and in states across the country (Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, 2019).

Outdated Inventory of Existing Units

Juxtaposed to the high cost of housing for households living in Westchester is the absence of a rich inventory of affordable housing for people who live or want to live in the county. Prior to the pandemic there were 345,885 housing units in the county. Sixty-one percent consisted of homeownership units and 38% were rentals. Much of the housing stock was characterized as dated—with 81% of the county’s housing units constructed before 1979. Fifty-seven percent were built before 1960 and 31% were built prior to 1940. An estimated 2,600 households lived in substandard housing units and 4,523 households lived under severely overcrowded conditions. This includes families living in units too small for the number of people in the household and/or households where multiple families resided in units designed for single family occupancy. Seventy-five thousand units (22%) of the county’s inventory of housing have more than two problems associated with the unit. In addition to an inventory of outdated units, the county’s housing inventory also includes 2,476 public housing units, 13,092 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher units, and 34,222 units protected under the Emergency Tenant Protection Act (Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, 2019).

Lack of a Commitment from Local Municipalities to Build Affordable Housing

The ability to increase the county's inventory of affordable housing has been a lingering problem for more than 30 years. The Westchester County Housing Opportunity Commission (WCHOC) draws upon two studies conducted by the Center for Policy Research at Rutgers University in 1991 and 2005 (WCHOC, 2005). Each forecast the county's housing needs over a 15-year period. Combined, these reports estimated 10,768 units would be needed by 2015 to meet the housing gap in Westchester. Operating on the assumption that all municipalities needed to develop their fair share of affordable housing, WCHOC conducted its own study in 2005 to determine what progress had been made by municipalities toward meeting the county's goal to develop 10,768 units of affordable housing. WCHOC predicted that officials in local municipalities might benefit from obtaining guidance from the county on how to best contribute to the affordable housing crisis (WCHOC, 2005). WCHOC was correct in its assumptions. Findings from WCHOC's final report revealed how (1) over a 15-year period, less than 10%, (970) units had been built; (2) 46% (23) municipalities failed to build a single unit; and (3) 91% of affordable housing units (9,798) allotted to municipalities on a fair-share basis went unmet. Among the 970 units built or under construction through 2015, a total of 613 were units built in municipalities that already had a significant amount of affordable housing units. This included Mount Vernon (134), White Plains (59), Ossining Village (66), Peekskill (127), Yonkers (27), and New Rochelle (200) units built or under construction as of 2015 (Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, 2019). (See Table 6 for the status of 2000-2015 allocations of affordable housing by municipalities.)

This illustration provides historical context within which to understand the long-term challenges faced by Westchester County government when working with local municipalities to build its fair share of affordable housing.

Table 6: Status of 2000-2015 Allocations of affordable Housing by Municipalities

	New Allocation	Units Completed and Under Construction	Remaining Obligation	Total of Remaining Obligation
Bronx River Valley	844	134	710	
Bronxville	101	0	101	
Eastchester	104	0	101	
Mount Vernon	249	134	115	
Pelham	74	0	74	
Pelham Manor	101	0	101	
Scarsdale	160	0	160	
Tuckahoe	56	0	56	710
Central County	4,192	139	4,053	
Ardsley	100	0	100	
Elmsford	48	10	38	
Greenburgh	701	14	687	
Harrison	756	0	756	
Mount Pleasant	975	0	975	
North Castle	712	0	712	
Pleasantville	129	24	105	
Rye Brook	171	32	139	
White Plains	599	59	540	4,053
HUDSON RIVER	2,645	362	2,283	
Briarcliff Manor	141	0	141	
Buchanan	56	0	56	
Cortlandt	403	119	284	
Croton	115	6	109	
Dobbs Ferry	105	0	105	
Hastings	97	4	93	
Irvington	156	0	156	
Ossining, Town	113	0	113	
Ossining, Village	194	66	128	
Peekskill	132	127	5	
Sleepy Hollow	113	7	106	
Tarrytown	111	6	105	
Yonkers	908	27	881	2,283
LONG ISLAND SOUND	1,135	219	916	
Larchmont	105	0	105	
Mamaroneck, Town	125	0	125	
Mamaroneck, Vil.	33	10	23	
New Rochelle	481	200	281	
Port Chester	224	0	224	
Rye	167	9	158	916
NORTH COUNTY	1,952	116	1,836	
Bedford	396	32	364	
Lewisboro	239	0	239	
Mount Kisco	124	0	124	
New Castle	255	0	255	
North Salem	152	4	148	
Pound Ridge	184	0	184	
Somers	224	0	224	
Yorktown	378	80	298	1,836

Note. Reprinted from Westchester County Housing Opportunity Commission. (2005, November 9). Affordable housing allocation plan 2000 - 2015. https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/pdfs/HOUSING_HOCallocation05.pdf

Zoning Laws and Their Impact on Limiting Affordable Housing Options

While the decision to live in a particular neighborhood is for the most part based on choice and affordability, government-sponsored zoning laws plays a significant role as well. The following section is a historical overview of a lawsuit that has shaped the housing patterns that currently exist within Westchester County.

A Landmark Decision and its Impact on Affordable Housing

In 2009, Westchester County adopted its Model Ordinance Provisions for local governments to use to revise their zoning laws to better accommodate the construction of fair and affordable housing. It was established as a framework for local governments to update their zoning laws to develop 750 units of fair and affordable housing in areas with low racial and ethnic diversity. The Anti-Discrimination Center sued Westchester County under the federal False Claims Act. It charged Westchester County government with failing to identify and develop a plan to remove structural barriers that impede access to fair housing in municipalities receiving HUD funding for the development of affordable housing. The county lost this lawsuit brought by the federal government and the establishment of the Model Ordinance Provisions was part of the settlement (Department of Justice, 2009).

According to the grant guidelines, those communities receiving funding from HUD for housing development had to make housing units generated from those funded projects available to anyone, regardless of their race, color, national origin, gender, handicap, or familial status. The Model Ordinance Provisions was the county's plan to lead a robust campaign to promote diversity and support for affordable housing in communities as outlined under the settlement (Department of Justice, 2009). It was designed to help local governments approve the development of affordable housing more consistent with local housing patterns. For example, instead of approving zoning for large blocks of affordable housing, a local municipality could adopt zoning legislation for approving market-rate housing development projects with a component to set aside a minimum of 10% of units for fair and affordable housing within its jurisdiction. This approach allowed local communities to maintain their integrity as quaint

suburban low-density communities, while expanding the availability of fair and affordable housing consistent with the settlement agreement (Department of Justice, 2009).

According to HUD, the county failed to provide an acceptable analysis to adequately address impediments that perpetuated discrimination (Department of Justice, 2009). This battle between HUD and the County of Westchester ensued for 8 years—with HUD repeatedly rejecting 11 of the county’s plans. This standoff between the county and HUD ended in 2017, under the Trump administration. HUD agreed that the county only needed to focus its attention on building affordable housing and not the eradication of impediments that perpetuate racism and segregation. While under the administration of County Executive Rob Astorino, Westchester County was exonerated from ignoring patterns of racial discrimination. This was despite the county never receiving approval by HUD for an analysis of obstacles to fair housing. It never adopted legislation that banned discrimination against residents who use government vouchers to pay their rent; nor did the county develop a strategy to eliminate zoning laws that impeded the efforts of Black and Latino residents to find housing (Hannah-Jones, 2012). All financial obligations between HUD and the county were resolved; and at least 750 units had been built (Sapien, 2017).

This landmark decision set the stage for the development of affordable housing for more than a decade. County government attempted to eliminate structural and economic barriers by working with many municipalities to adopt some or all portions of the county’s Model Ordinance Provisions. In addition, the county has partnered with private-sector developers who build market-rate rentals and homeownership projects with a component to set aside a portion of units to be sold at below market rates. Despite advances made, the county continues to fall short of achieving its goal to develop the 10,768 additional affordable units needed to respond to the demand.

New Approach to Increasing the Affordable Housing Stock

In 2023, Governor Hochul reported to the NYS Legislature on how over the last 10 years, New York State had created more than 1.2 million jobs. During the same period, only 403,000 new units of housing were created. In the Hudson Valley, 6,000 more jobs than homes were

created over the same decade, further exacerbating the demand for housing (New York State, 2023, March).

This shortage has become so acute, Governor Hochul sought in her 2023-2024 budget, approval from the NYS Legislature for her New York State Housing Compact—a comprehensive statewide approach to address New York’s housing crisis. Hochul called for the building of 800,000 new homes by 2033. This plan consisted of a multipronged strategy designed for every community to do their part to address the state’s housing crisis (New York State, 2023, March). Specifically, the plan first would have required New York City and its suburbs, including Westchester County, to increase its housing supply by 3% every 3 years. Towns in other regions in the state would have been required to increase their supply by 1% every 3 years. Second, communities along MTA computer rail lines would have been targeted for rezoning to make way for higher density housing development. Finally, the state would have been able to override local zoning laws in areas that fail to increase their housing supply. The plan failed and subsequently, Governor Hochul’s proposed plan was omitted from the state budget (Gay, 2023).

New York State’s housing reform efforts have not kept up with its peer states throughout the country, many of which have moved away from granting full authority to local governments to manage their own land-use policies. Increasingly, they have moved toward land-use reform that allow states to override local land-use policies to make way for housing development. Other states have been more aggressive in pushing for changes in exclusionary land-use laws that impede growth and development. Government officials recognized how maintaining restrictive zoning laws directly impacts the ability to build affordable housing (Kahlenberg, 2023). Failing to do so increases the cost for building and sustaining affordable housing. It impedes climate goals, creates an inefficient economy, and hampers the building of special housing to address the household needs of the state’s vulnerable populations—seniors, large families, and the disabled (Kazis, 2020). Hochul’s Housing Compact Plan was her strategy to reform the state’s land-use policies to be more consistent with 21st century practices around the governance and use of zoning laws.

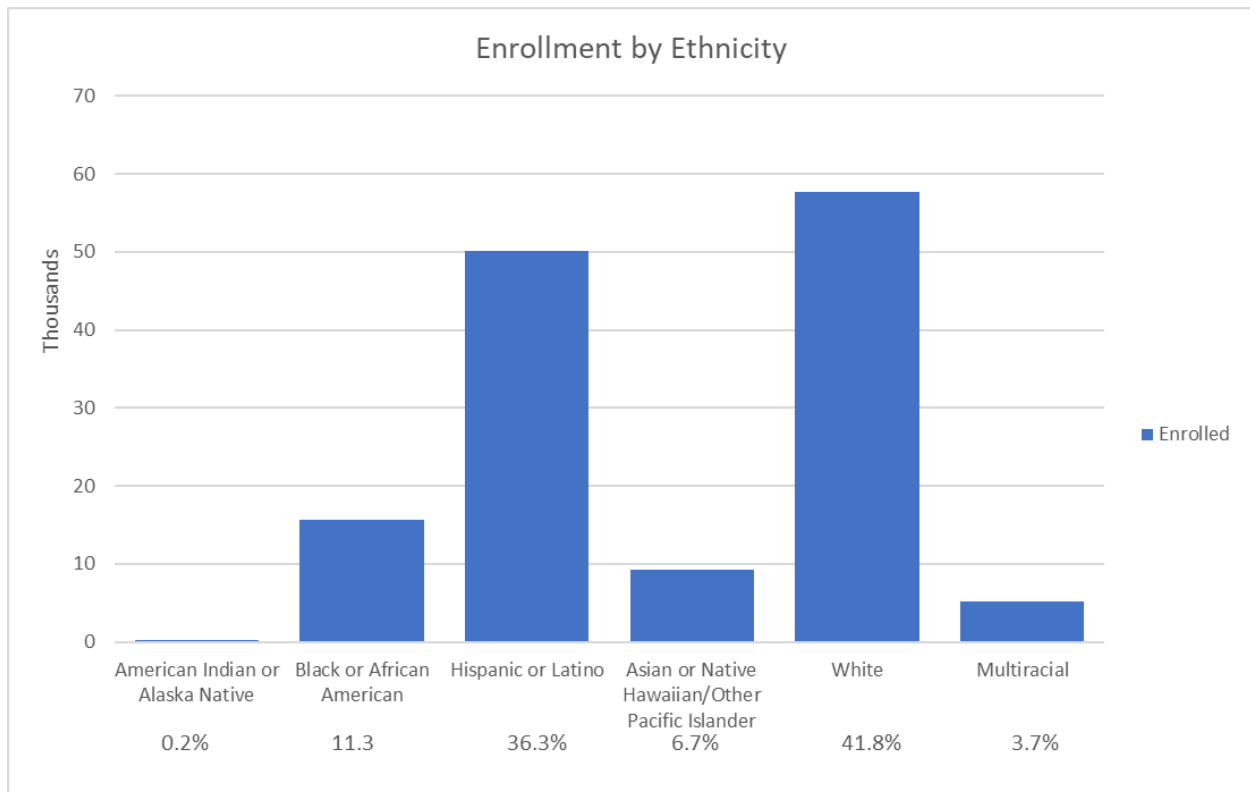
The State of Public Education in Westchester County

Overview of Educational Services for Westchester’s Children

Westchester has a strong network of private schools from which families can choose for their children. Iona Prep Hackley, Rye Country Day, and Maria Regina High School are among several high-performing private schools in the county. The county also has an impressive network of public schools located in 43 school districts in communities throughout the county. The vast majority of Westchester families (90%) of all households choose public schools for the educational needs of their children (Niche, 2023).

In 2022, 138,198 students were in K-12 schools. Fifty-two percent were male, 48% female, and 0.01% non-binary students. White students represented the largest population (42%) attending Westchester public schools, Latino/Hispanic students (36%) represented the second largest population, followed by students of African ancestry (11%), Asian or Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (7%), and multiracial (4%) of all students attending public schools in Westchester (data.nysed.gov, n.d.). (See Figure 1 for Westchester’s student enrollment by racial groups, 2021-2022.)

Figure 1: Student Enrollment by Racial Groups (2021-2022)



Note. Reprinted from the Westchester Index, an initiative of the Westchester Community Foundation. <https://westchesterindex.org/>

There are 12,882 students (9%) classified as English language learners; 21,879 (16%) are students with disabilities; 53,819 (39%) are economically disadvantaged; 1,443 are without homes; and 139 are in foster care. Westchester public schools also provides a host of services for students with special needs (NYS Department of Education, 2022).

In 2021-2022, the graduation rate was 92% among the 11,324 high school seniors. This exceeded the 87% graduation rate for New York State. Twenty-four percent of Westchester graduates received a Regents Diploma with Advanced Placement and 67% received a Regents Diploma. The dropout rate was 2% in comparison to 5% for New York State (data.nysed.gov, n.d.).

Westchester is recognized for having some of the best public schools in the state and in the nation. For example, surveys conducted by Niche ranked Scarsdale Union Free School 11th among the best school districts in America. It also ranked eight Westchester school districts

among the top 21 school districts in NYS. Niche is a comprehensive web-based data source on US K-12 schools, colleges, and neighborhoods. To develop profiles of institutions and neighborhoods, Niche uses public data from the Department of Education, U.S. Census, Common Core Data from the National Center for Education Statistics, and Civil Rights Data Collection. In addition, it gathers data from surveys administered to students and parents across the United States (Niche, 2023).

The Presence of a Two-Tier System for Educational Services

Because public schools are funded largely by property taxes, school districts located in communities with high property taxes have larger budgets for very generous educational services. Districts in poorer communities have smaller budgets with which to provide educational service for children in those districts. This has resulted in a two-tier system for the delivery of services to children—one serving resource-rich school districts catering to families in wealthy, high-income communities and another system, serving resource-poor school districts catering to families in lower income communities with lower property taxes. In an effort to illustrate the inequities within Westchester’s public school districts, Kahlenberg (2023) conducted an analysis of two school districts, both in close proximity of one another—Scarsdale Union Free School District and the Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District. Specifically, he examined resources available for educational services and the extent to which students are excelling academically. Findings revealed that although these two school districts are less than 10 miles apart, there are stark differences in the educational experiences children received as well as what they academically accomplished. Following are descriptions of these two school districts and their offerings.

In 2021, Scarsdale had a population of 18,253 residents who resided on seven square miles of land. Seventy-one percent of the population were non-Hispanic White, 6.5% Hispanic, 15.7% Asian, and 1.7% Black. Almost all the adults (90%) held at least a 4-year college degree. The household median income for Scarsdale was more than \$250,000. In contrast, the Village of Port Chester had a population of 31,693 and resided on 2.4 square miles of land. Sixty-four percent of the population was Hispanic, 27.7% non-Hispanic /White, 5.2% Black, and 1.4% Asian. Thirty-one percent of adults in Port Chester had at least a bachelor’s degree—an

educational attainment gap of 59 points between these two communities. The median household income for Port Chester was \$88,093—an estimated \$162,000 gap in household income (Kahlenberg, 2023). (See Table 7 for 2021 Scarsdale and Port Chester demographics.)

Table7: Scarsdale and Port Chester Demographics, 2021

	Scarsdale	Port Chester
Median Household Income	250,000	\$88,093
Percentage of adults with a bachelor’s degree or higher	90.7	31.1
White (Non-Hispanic)	71.2	27.7
Black	1.7	5.2
Hispanic	6.5	64.2
Asian	15.7	1.4

Note. Reprinted from Kahlenberg, R. D. (2023, July 17). *How zoning drives educational inequality: The case of Westchester County.* The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-zoning-drives-educational-inequality-the-case-of-westchester-county/>

In 2021, while there were no students enrolled in Scarsdale’s elementary school who qualified for free or reduced lunch, 75% of students enrolled in Port Chester’s elementary school qualified for free or reduced lunch. Kahlenberg’s investigation revealed differences in the resources to which children from Scarsdale and Port Chester had access. For example, in 2020-2021, per-pupil spending in Scarsdale was \$20,571 in contrast to Port Chester’s per-pupil spending of \$15,119—a \$5,500 gap in per-pupil expenditures. Students in Scarsdale had access to more teacher time than students in Port Chester. In Scarsdale, there were 7.5 students for every teacher in comparison to Port Chester, where there were 10.1 students for every teacher. Students in Scarsdale had access to more experienced teachers than did students in Port Chester. Kahlenberg (2023) found that less than one percent (0.7%) of teachers in the Scarsdale school district were in their first or second year as professional teachers. In comparison, 17.7% of the teacher workforce in Port Chester’s school district consisted of

teachers in their first or second year as professional educators. This represents five times the rate of Scarsdale. (See Table 8 for Scarsdale and Port Chester school factors and outcomes.)

Table 8: Scarsdale and Port Chester School Factors and Outcomes

	Scarsdale	Port Chester
Percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch, elementary level 2021-2022	0.0	74.6%
Per-pupil expenditure, 2020	20,591	15,119
Student-teacher ratios elementary level, 2021	7.4	10.1
Share of teachers in their first or second year of teaching	0.7%	17.7%
% of student performing at grade level in English, 2019	87.1%	32.0%
% of students performing at grade level in math in 2019	90.3%	34.5%
% of high school students who graduated in 4 years, 2019	98.9	84.1

Note. Reprinted from Kahlenberg, R. D. (2023, July 17). *How zoning drives educational inequality: The case of Westchester County*. The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/how-zoning-drives-educational-inequality-the-case-of-westchester-county/>

Students attending schools in Scarsdale also benefit from the economic strength of their community. For example, Kahlenberg (2023) discussed how the PTA for a local school district raised, in a single year, \$50,000 for their children’s school. This gift from the local PTA was a contribution to the school over and above the district’s per-pupil expenditures. The ability of this PTA to raise \$50,000 for their children’s local school is a result of families in high-income communities having a comfortable amount of discretionary income and access to a network of potential wealthy donors where they live and work. Kahlenberg points out the unlikelihood of the parents in any Port Chester PTA raising \$50,000 for their children’s school.

In school year 2021-2022, these two school districts received their designations from the NYS accountability system. Scarsdale was designated as a school district in *good standing*. The district received its good-standing designation because all students in the district met all their academic indicators. Because some student subgroups in the Port Chester school district

did not meet all their academic indicators, Port Chester was designated as a *target* school district (Kahlenberg, 2023).

There is a growing body of research (Allegretto et al., 2022; Barnum, 2019; Martin et al., 2018) where findings show class size and per pupil dollars spent on a child's education increases student performance. Based on what we know about resources needed to drive success among students, a more equitable distribution of resources to school districts like Port Chester could produce better academic outcomes. The equity gap between the Scarsdale and Port Chester school districts is a microcosm of what is taking place in public school districts throughout the nation. In Part II of this report, we examine inequities in the various economies in Westchester County and its impact on people of African ancestry. Our examination will include a study of eight school districts serving children in wealthy and poor communities and inequities that have resulted in a two-tier system for educational services in Westchester County. In the next section, we examine Westchester's healthcare network.

A Snapshot of Westchester’s Network of Healthcare Services

In 2022, Westchester’s network of healthcare services was ranked sixth among 62 counties in New York State by the national County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R), a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program. This distinction recognizes Westchester for being a place where the healthiest people reside. The criteria used for this ranking system is based on the County Health Ranking Model, designed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Drawing from quantitative and qualitative data the County Health Ranking Model can be used to measure the health of counties throughout the nation (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2023).

The County Health Ranking Model

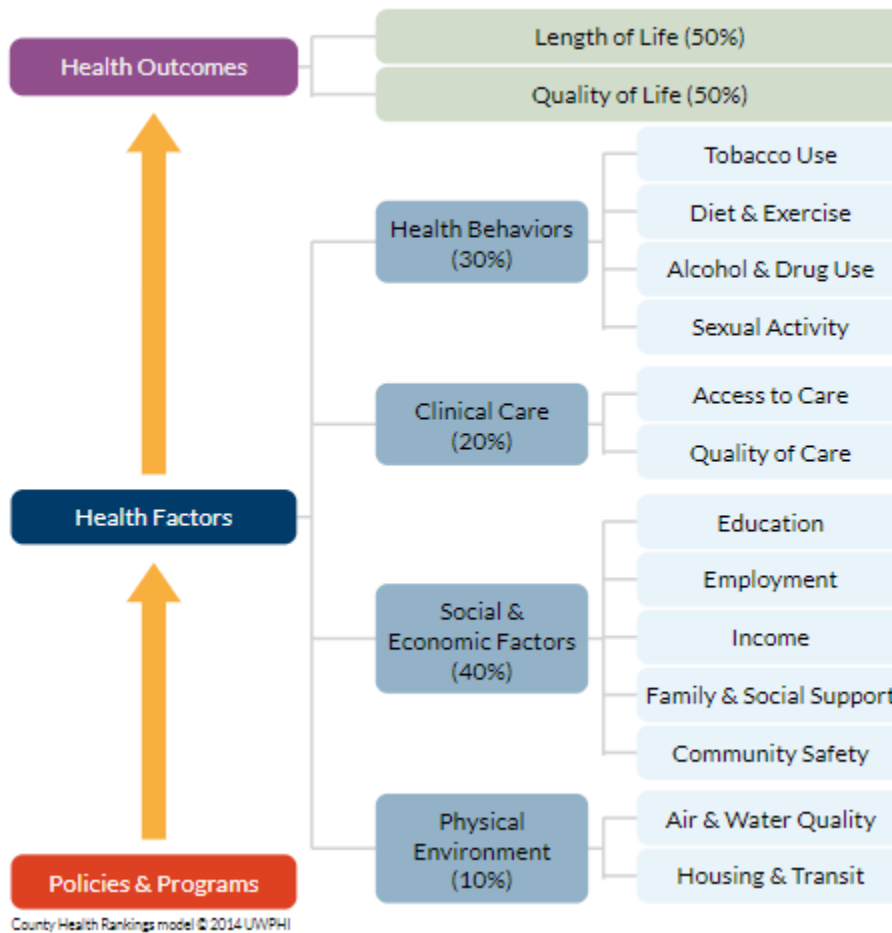
The principles under which CHR&R subscribes is that everyone plays a role in shaping the state of healthiness of a community. The quality of our homes, the sense of safety we feel about the neighborhoods in which we live, and our educational choices are all contributing factors for the quality of healthiness within a community. CHR&R offers its ranking model to counties as a tool for developing and generating community support for a broad vision for healthcare. CHR&R is interested in outcomes that inform us of (1) how long the people in a community live and (2) the quality of life they experience in communities within which they live. There are three basic assumptions for the County Health Ranking Model. It subscribes to the notion that policies and practices can shape factors that influence healthcare outcomes. There are four factors policy and practice can influence:

- Health behaviors—practices that can help or harm an individual’s state of health, such as smoking, unhealthy eating habits.
- Clinical care—anything related to medical treatment and having access to a wide range of affordable services.
- Social and economic factors— income, education and employment, community safety and social support, and not having to choose between competing essential needs.

- Physical environment—safe spaces where people can live, play, work, and learn about the world within which they live.

Communities can implement policies to influence these factors to generate more favorable health outcomes for residents (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2023). (See Figure 2 for an illustration of the County Health Model.)

Figure 2: County Health Rankings Model



Note. Reprinted from University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. (2024). *County Health Rankings Model*. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model/health-factors/physical-environment?>. Copyright 2014 UWPHI.

Findings from the County Health Model

One indicator for a measurable health outcome is to measure the average lifespan of people within a community. The other indicator is to ascertain the level of physical and mental

health people experience during their lifespan. Based on the measurements used under the County Health Model, between 2018 and 2020, Westchester experienced 4,600 years of life lost to people younger than age 75 per 100,000 people. Westchester had fewer premature deaths than New York as well as fewer than the national average (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2023).

To measure quality of life indicators, each year CHR&R conducts a telephone survey to all 50 states and the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. Through its Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, more than 400,000 respondents are contacted by landline telephone or cell phone and are asked to respond to questions about the quality of health they are experiencing. For poor or fair health, respondents were asked what their health condition in the last 30 days was. For poor physical health days, respondents were asked how many days they displayed poor physical health within the past 30 days. Eight percent (8%) of respondents from the survey conducted CHR&R had children with low birth weights (University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2023). Low birthweight infants are 20 times more likely to die than babies with normal birthweights. Low birthweight children are at risk of having a life of adverse outcomes including, decreased growth, low IQ, language deficiencies and chronic health conditions. (See Table 9 for sample responses to quality-of-life survey questions.)

Table 9: Sample Response to Quality-of-Life Survey Questions 2018 - 2020

	Year	Factors	Westchester	New York	National
Length of Life					
	2018-2018	Premature Deaths	4,600	6,000	7,300
Quality of Life	2020	Poor or fair health	10%	12%	12%
	2020	Poor physical health days	2.5%	2.7%	3.0%
		Poor mental health days	4.2	4.1%	4.4
		Low birthweight	8%	8%	8%
Health Factors		Not included in Overall Survey Ranking			
		Adult Smoking	11%	12%	16%
		Adult Obesity	21%	27%	32%
		Food Environment Index	9.1	8.9	7.0
		Physical Inactivity	21%	25%	22%
		Access to Exercise Opportunities	100%	93%	84%
		Excessive Drinking	17%	18%	19%
		Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	23%	20%	37%
		Sexually transmitted infections Per 100,000 People	311.8	502.3	481.3
		Teen Births	8	13	19

Note. Reprinted from University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. (2023) *Explore health rankings, New York, Westchester County, 2023*. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/new-york/westchester?year=2023>

Leading causes for premature death are malignant neoplasm, heart disease, COVID, accidents, and diabetes mellitus. (See Table 10 for leading causes of premature deaths.)

Table 10: Leading Causes of Death Under Age 75

Types of Deaths	# of Deaths	Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000
Malignant Neoplasms	2,277	61.8%
Diseases of Heart	1,629	44.0%
COVID	752	20.9%
Accident	672	24.4%
Diabetes	225	6.1%

Note. Reprinted from University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. (2023) *Explore health rankings, New York, Westchester County, 2023*. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/new-york/westchester?year=2023>

Based on findings from the County Health Ranking for Westchester, the county scored higher in health outcomes and factors than New York State as well as the national average.

Part I of this report presented a snapshot of Westchester County. This included an overview of the state of the Westchester economy in the aftermath of the pandemic, the housing market, and its availability of affordable housing. We also provided an overview of Westchester’s public school system for Westchester’s children in K-2 schools and an overview of Westchester’s healthcare network of services. Part II provides an analysis of the state of people of African ancestry and the structural barriers that impede their progress.

**Part II: The State of People of African Ancestry
and Structural Barriers that Impede Them
from Thriving in Westchester County**

The State of People of African Ancestry and Barriers that Impede Their Progress

The forecast for Westchester in 2024 predicts a county well-positioned to resume its place as a major economy in the Hudson Valley region. The heavy construction industry, healthcare, and commercial and residential real estate industries are all on course for expansion. New economies like energy and climate change are set to become one of the fastest growing industries in the region. The unemployment rate, though slightly increased, is 3.5%. The graduation rate is 92% and healthcare is ranked among the highest in New York State. Great opportunities lie ahead as the demand grows for a much-needed workforce.

In spite of the healthy forecast for the Westchester economy, access to benefits from the economy is not available to all the people who live or desire to live in the county. First, people of African ancestry have the highest unemployment rate among all racial groups living in Westchester. According to the Westchester County Department of Health (2023), the overall unemployment rate for the civilian labor force in 2022 was 5.7%. In contrast it was 7.5% for people of African ancestry, 2.5% higher than the County's unemployment rate. This rate is higher than the unemployment rate for the Hispanic population (6.1%), the White population (5.0%), and the Asian population, (6.1%) during the same period.

Second, people of African ancestry have the lowest household median income among all racial/ethnic groups in Westchester. Between 2016 and 2020 the average median income for this group was \$64,125. In comparison, the average median income for the Hispanic population was \$69,118; for Asians, \$137,780; and for White households, the average median income was \$115,931 (Westchester County Department of Health, 2023). Third, people of African ancestry lag in business ownership. The White population represents the majority of business owners in Westchester County—79.1%; the Asian population, 11.1%; and the Hispanic population, 7.5%. People of African ancestry had the fewest business owners in Westchester—3.0%. Because business ownership is a critical factor in acquiring wealth, people of African ancestry are at a disadvantage for accumulating generational wealth (Westchester Community Foundation, 2022). (See Table 11 for economic indicators for wealth by racial groups in Westchester 2016-2020.)

Table 11: Economic Indicators for Wealth by Racial Groups in Westchester 2016-2020

Economic Indicator	Black	White	Latino/Hispanic	Asian
Median Income	\$64,124	\$115,931	\$69,118	\$137,780
Unemployment	7.5%	5.1%	6.1%	5.1%
% of Homeownership	37%	73%	35%	64%
% in Poverty	15%	6%	13%	6%
% of Business Ownership	3%	79%	7.5%	11%
Homelessness	21%	3.6%	5.9%	0.4%

Note. Reprinted from Westchester Community Foundation. (2022, Spring). *The Westchester index: A community indicator project for regional action.* <https://westchesterindex.org/>

Barriers to Full Participation in U.S.-Based Economies

Inequities in the education system, lending practices of banking institutions, the legacy of slavery and public policies that legalized the institution of segregation, and persistent discrimination are some of the causes being discussed among scholars and policy makers to explain the inequities in the U.S. economy. Because of the limited amount of available public records on race and the potential influence it is having on the workforce, it is difficult to examine racial inequities and the extent to which it may or may not be present in Westchester County. We began our inquiry by searching national databases that track demographic and diversity patterns of workforces in U.S.-based industries. We were interested in understanding how people of African ancestry across the country were meaningfully engaged in the U.S. economy. Findings from the research we obtained are designed to increase public awareness of trends in policies and practices on the national level that might offer insight into experiences in the workplace being realized by people of African ancestry in Westchester. Through the theoretical lens of occupational segregation, we examined the U.S.-based workforce as well as workforces in two industries important to the Westchester economy—healthcare and the construction industries.

Occupational Segregation in the U.S. Workforce

It has long been held that education is the path to upward mobility in American society. The higher the educational attainment achieved by workers in the labor force, the greater the likelihood they would advance in their professions and benefit from higher wages. The successful advances realized by workers would have been because of being highly competitive

in a race-neutral labor force (Lohr, 2023). Jardina et al. (2023) questioned this assumption, given the financial benefits realized by people of African ancestry who have made major advances in education attainment over the past two decades. Jardina et al. (2023) argued how, despite accomplishments gained among people of African ancestry over the past several years, income gains have been less than their White counterparts in the workforce. Jardina et al. (2023) attributed this phenomenon to occupational segregation, “the degree to which members of different racial groups are distributed across different types of occupations” (p. 1). This research team examined occupational segregation by race and education level between 1980 and 2019. Findings show that rising levels of education do not necessarily eliminate occupational segregation.

The Impact of Occupational Segregation on People of African Ancestry

In 2022, there were 21 million people working in the U.S. labor market, of which people of African ancestry represented 13%. Drawing from federal data sources and survey findings conducted by the Pew Research Center, Schaeffer (2023) examined the experiences of people of African ancestry in the workforce. Findings from the study offer insight into the Black experience compared to the overall workforce as well as to other racial groups. One finding relevant for our study was that people of African ancestry tend to be overrepresented in certain occupations. For example, while Black workers represent 13% of all full-time, part-time, and self-employed workers, they represent 40.4% of occupations among postal service clerks, 36.5% of occupations in inner-city transportation systems, 36.6% of occupations among nursing assistants, 36.0% in the areas of security and surveillance, and 32.5% among home and health aide professions. (See Table 12 for the occupations where Black workers make up 25% or more of the workforce.)

Table 12: Occupation Where Black Workers Make Up 25% or More of the Workplace

%	Occupation	%	Occupation
40.0%	Postal service clerks	28.2%	Motor vehicle operators, all other
38.5%	Postal service mail sorters, processors and processing machine operators	27.3%	Social workers, all other
36.6%	Bus drivers, transit, and inter city	27.3%	Correctional officers and jailers
36.0%	Nursing assistants	27.1%	Barbers
34.5%	Security guards and gambling surveillance officers	26.3%	Taxi drivers
32.5%	Home health aides	26.2%	Personal care aides
32.0%	Compensation, benefits and job analysis specialists	26.2%	Parking attendants
31.6%	Psychiatric technicians	26.1%	Shuttle drivers and chauffeurs
30.5%	Child, family, and school social workers	25.8%	Insurance claims and policy processing clerks
30.0%	Orderlies and psychiatric aides	25.8%	Refuse and recyclable materials collectors
29.1%	Licensed practical, licensed vocational nurses	25.0%	Social and human service assistants

Note. Black workers are 12.% of all occupations. Pew Research Center Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey (2022), in Schaeffer, K. (2023, August 21). *Black workers’ views and experiences in the U.S. labor force stand out in key ways.* PEW Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/08/31/black-workers-views-and-experiences-in-the-us-labor-force-stand-out-in-key-ways>

In contrast, people of African ancestry were underrepresented in management-type positions. For example, while they represent 13% of the U.S. workforce, they make up 1.5% of managers for ranchers and agriculture, 2.2% of managers in engineering and technologies, 3.6% in mechanical engineering, and 6.0% of managers in electrical and electronics engineering (Schaeffer, 2023).

Another relevant finding from Schaeffer’s study was that Black workers generally earn less than others in the labor market. In 2020, the median weekly salary for full-time or salary workers who were Black was \$823 (equal to a salary of \$45,656 a year) compared to an average weekly salary of \$1,059 for all workers (an estimated \$55,068 a year); for Hispanics, \$823 (\$42,796); for White workers, \$1,085 (\$56,420), and for Asian workers, \$1,401 (\$72,852).

Finally, findings from Schaeffer’s study show the unemployment rate for Black workers was the

highest among all workers and double the national level. For example, in 2022, the national unemployment rate was 3.7% for men and 3.6% for women. For Black men, it was 6.3% and Black women, 6.0%. For White men and women, it was 3% and it was 4% each for Hispanic men and women (Schaeffer, 2022).

In summary, in 2022, people of African ancestry were overrepresented in lower-paying non managerial occupations and underrepresented in managerial occupations. Their weekly salaries were less than all workers including all other historically disenfranchised ethnic groups. In addition, people of African ancestry had the highest unemployment rate among all groups in the U.S. workforce (Schaeffer, 2023). In the next section we draw on findings from these national trends to identify the extent to which occupational segregation is present in two types of industries important to the Westchester’s economy—the healthcare and the construction industries.

National Trends in the Construction Industry

Non-Hispanic White workers represented 62.4% of the U.S. workforce, Hispanics represented 17.6%, non-Hispanic-Blacks 11.3%, and non-Hispanic Asians 6.2%. While Hispanic workers were overrepresented in the construction industry, given their (17.6%) representation in the U.S. workforce, Black workers were underrepresented in the construction market, given their (11.3%) representation in the U.S. workforce (Gallagher McAnaw, 2022). (See Table 13 for construction and total employment by race and ethnicity, 2020.)

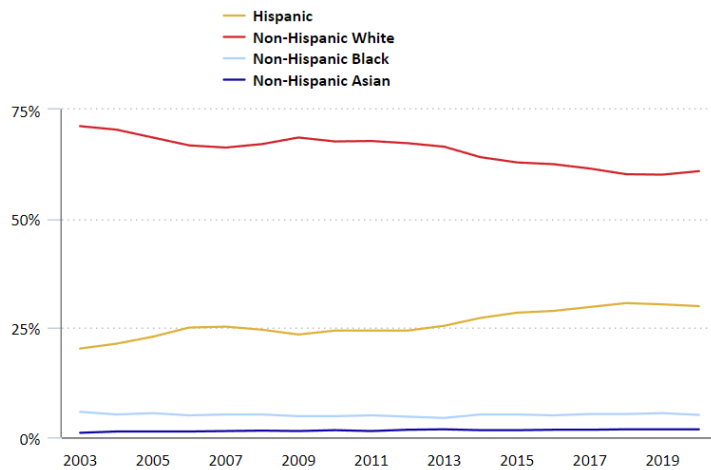
Table 13: Construction and Total Employment by Race and Ethnicity, 2020

Race and Ethnicity	Total Employment	Construction
Hispanic	17.6%	30.0%
Non-Hispanic White	62.4%	60.9%
Non-Hispanic Black	11.3%	5.1%
Non-Hispanic Asian	6.2%	1.8%

Note. Reprinted from Gallagher McAnaw, C. (2020). *The construction industry: Characteristics of the employed, 2003-2020*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/the-construction-industry-labor-force-2003-to-2020/home.htm>

Between 2003 and 2020, there were no significant changes in the underrepresentation of Black workers in the construction industry. It remained steady at 5% for 17 years (Gallagher McAnaw, 2022). (See Figure 3 for the change in percent distribution of construction employment by race and ethnicity, 2003 to 2020.)

Figure 3: Change in Percent Distribution of Construction Employment by Race and Ethnicity, 2003 to 2020



Note. Reprinted from Gallagher McAnaw, C. (2022). *The construction industry: Characteristics of the employed, 2003-2020*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/the-construction-industry-labor-force-2003-to-2020/home.htm>

There are seven types of occupation groups in the construction industry: construction and extractions; management, business, and financial operations; installation, maintenance, and repair; office and administrative support; transportation and moving; commuter, engineering, and science; and other occupations. The greatest number of workers (59%) held occupations in construction and extraction, followed by workers in management, business, and financial operations (21%); installation, maintenance, and repair (6%); office and administrative support (5.1%); transportation and material moving (3%); computer, engineering, and science (3%); and other occupations (4%) (Gallagher McAnaw, 2022). (See Table 14 for total construction employment by occupational groups, 2020.)

Table 14: Total Construction Employment by Occupational Groups- 2020

Occupation	Total Construction Employment
Construction and Extraction	59.0%
Management, business, financial operations	20.5%
Installation, maintenance and repair	5.7%
Office and administrative support	5.1%
Transportation and material moving	2.9%
Computer, engineering and science	2.5%
Other occupations	4.0%

Note. Reprinted from Gallagher McAnaw, C. (2022). *The construction industry: Characteristics of the employed, 2003-2020*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/the-construction-industry-labor-force-2003-to-2020/home.htm>

In 2020, most workers in construction and extractions occupations were held by Hispanic and Black workers, (76.3%) and (61%), respectively. In contrast, workers in management, business, and finance were White (26.2%) and Asian (24.8%); Black and Hispanic workers were least likely to have occupations in management (Gallagher McAnaw, 2022). (See Table 15 for the percent distribution of race and ethnicity within construction occupational groups, 2020.)

Table 15: Percent Distribution of Race and Ethnicity within Construction Occupational Groups, 2020

Ethnicity	Construction and Extractions	Management, Business, Financial Operations	Installation Maint., and Repair	Office and Admin Support	Trans., Material Moving	Computer Engineering and Science	Other
Hispanic	76.3	9.9	4.8	3.0	1.9	0.8	3.2
Non-Hispanic White	51.4	26.2	5.8	6.3	3.1	2.8	4.4
Non-Hispanic Black	61.7	12.3	9.4	3.3	5.4	4.4	3.4
Non-Hispanic Asian	42.0	24.8	6.5	5.4	1.7	14.1	5.6

Note. Reprinted from Gallagher McAnaw, C. (2022). *The construction industry: Characteristics of the employed, 2003-2020*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/the-construction-industry-labor-force-2003-to-2020/home.htm>

Overall, Black workers are underrepresented throughout the construction industry, given their representation (11.3%) in the U.S. labor market. Despite their overall standing, they only represent 5.1% of the U.S construction workforce. In addition, the 5% of this Black workforce is underrepresented in all management occupations within the construction industry. For example, they are slightly underrepresented in occupations as first-line supervisors (4.6%) and underrepresented in occupations in construction management (2.5%) and management in other than construction management (3.1%). In contrast, White workers, 60.9% of the construction workforce, are overrepresented in all occupations related to management—first-line supervisors, 64.9%, construction managers, 78.9%, and managers other than construction management, 78.5% (Gallagher McAnaw, 2022). (See Table 16 for the race and ethnicity distribution in top 10 construction occupations, 2020.)

Table 16: Percent Race and Ethnicity Distribution in Top Ten Construction Occupations 2020

Occupation	Non-Hispanic Asian	Non Hispanic Black	Hispanic	Non Hispanic White
Total Construction	1.8	5.1	30.0	60.9
Construction Laborers	1.3	6.1	46.7	44.1
Carpenters	1.3	4.5	35.9	56.3
Managers other than Construction Managers	1.4	3.1	14.4	78.5
Construction Managers	2.7	2.5	14.3	78.9
Electricians	1.6	5.6	25.0	65.8
First-Line Supervisors	1.2	4.6	27.1	64.9
Painters and Paperhangers	0.2	3.4	52.5	42.2
Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	1.7	4.5	25.9	65.9
HVAC/Refrigeration Mechanics & Installers	2.8	9.7	22.5	61.6
Construction Equipment Operators	0.1	8.8	16.3	72.3

Note. Reprinted from Gallagher McAnaw, C. (2022). *The construction industry: Characteristics of the employed, 2003-2020.* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2022/the-construction-industry-labor-force-2003-to-2020/home.htm>

The evidence of occupational segregation in the construction industry is consistent with the research on national employment trends conducted by Schaeffer (2023). Next, we will review trends in healthcare, another economy important to Westchester.

National Trends in the Healthcare Industry

Salsberg et al. (2021) examined the healthcare workforce and its education pipeline for graduates being prepared for 10 healthcare occupations. In 2019, the total population in the US was 158.6 million, within which the Black population was estimated at 12.1%; Native American, 1.3%, Hispanic, 18.2%, and White, 60.1%. This research team was interested in knowing the extent to which racial groups among healthcare professionals in the healthcare industry reflected their representation in the general population. The sample size for the

Salsberg et al. study was based on the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) with an estimated weighted count of 148,358,252 individuals between the age of 20 and 65 who were working or in search of work in the healthcare industry. They also examined a weighted total count of 71,608,009 individuals, between the ages of 20 and 35 years who were in the educational pipeline.

In 2019, 12% of the U.S. workforce of working age (20 to 65 years old) was comprised of Black workers. In contrast, among the 10 healthcare occupations examined by Salsberg et al., Black representation in occupations ranged from 3.3% among physical therapists to 11.4% among respiratory therapists. Black workers came close to being perfectly represented in two occupations—respiratory nurses and registered nurses. However, they were underrepresented in all the 10 healthcare occupations examined. Hispanics comprised 18.2% of the working-age population; yet their range of representation among the 10 healthcare occupations under study was from 3.3% for physical therapists to 10.8% among respiratory therapists. This group was also underrepresented in all the 10 healthcare occupations examined. Native Americans comprised 0.6% of the total working population. In contrast their representation among occupations ranged from 0.0% of physical therapists to 0.6% among respiratory therapists. While their representation was more consistent with the population they represent, this group was underrepresented in nine of the 10 healthcare occupations. White healthcare workers (61%) of the total working population were overrepresented in all 10 of the healthcare occupations reviewed (Salsberg et al., 2021). (See Table 17 for workforce estimates of health diagnosing and treating practitioners in 2019.)

Table 17: Workforce Estimates of Health Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners 2019

Practitioner	White	Black	Native American	Hispanic
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	79.4	7.3	0.3	5.5
Dentist	68.7	4.4	0.1	5.7
Pharmacist	65.4	7.5	0.2	3.7
Physician	62.4	5.2	0.1	6.9
Physician Assistant	75.9	4.5	0.5	7.3
Occupational Therapist	80.5	6.1	0.2	5.2
Physical Therapist	76.7	3.3	0	3.3
Respiratory Therapist	66.3	11.4	0.9	10.8
Speech Language Pathologist	84.4	4.7	0.5	6.4
Registered Nurse	68.9	11.3	0.4	7.8

Note. Adapted from Salsberg, E., Richwine, C., Westergaard, S., Martinez, M. P., Oyeyemi, T., Vichare, A., Chen, C. P. (2021). Estimation and comparison of current and future racial/ethnic representation in the US health care workforce. *JAMA Netw Open.*, 4(3). <https://doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.3789>

In 2019, 13.7% of the U.S. population between the ages of 20 and 35 was Black. Among educational programs preparing young professionals in the 10 healthcare occupations Salsberg et al.'s (2021) research examined, the range of representation leading to those occupations for Black workers was 3.1% for physician assistants and 14.2% for advanced practice registered nurses. Hispanic young professionals comprised 21.3% of the U.S. population between the ages of 20 to 35. In contrast, the range of new Hispanic professionals leading to the 10 occupations ranged from 6.6% for pharmacist to 19.0% for respiratory therapist. Native Americans comprised 0.7% of the U.S. population of the same age. The range of this group leading to healthcare occupations ranged from 0.0% for occupational therapist to 6.7% for respiratory therapist (Salsberg et al., 2021).

In 2019, advanced practice registered nurses working in the field who were Black, represented 7.3% of the general workforce. Graduating professionals who were Black and entering the field represented 14.2% of the general workforce. Dentists who were Hispanic and

working in the workforce represented 5.7% of the general workforce. Graduating professionals entering the field represented 9.8% (Salsberg et al., 2021). (See Table 18 for the estimated representation of healthcare graduates in 2019.)

**Table 18: Estimate Representation of Healthcare Graduates in the Education Pipeline
Diagnosing and Treating Practitioners**

Practitioner	White	Black	Native American	Hispanic
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	63.7	14.2	0.5	11.4
Dentist	56.5	4.9	0.3	9.8
Pharmacist	53.3	9.5	0.4	6.6
Physician	59.5	5.8	0.4	8.5
Physician Assistant	77.2	3.1	0.3	7.8
Occupational Therapist	78.2	4.2	0.2	7.7
Physical Therapist	76.1	3.2	0.3	7.1
Respiratory Therapist	54.3	13.3	0.7	19.0
Speech Language Pathologist	79.1	3.9	0.4	10.6
Registered Nurse	65.2	11.3	0.6	13.6

Note. Adapted from Salsberg, E., Richwine, C., Westergaard, S., Martinez, M. P., Oyeyemi, T., Vichare, A., Chen, C. P. (2021). Estimation and comparison of current and future racial/ethnic representation in the US health care workforce. *JAMA Netw Open.*, 4(3). <https://doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.3789>

The data revealed that some progress has been made toward a more diverse workplace where the racial/ethnic profile of the workforce was moving toward being more consistent with the community it served. For example, the percentage of Hispanic graduates increased in each of the 10 healthcare occupations. Their representation in two occupations, almost doubled the current workforce—respiratory therapist for the current workforce and graduates in the pipeline 10.8% and 19.0%, respectively, and registered nurses 7.8% and 13.6% respectively. Black graduates realized a significant increase in their representation in the advanced practice registered nursing occupations, with 14% of graduates in the pipeline—double the 7.3% of the current workforce. Black workers made modest increased representation in three occupations:

dentist (4.9%), pharmacist (9.5%), and respiratory therapist (13.3%). Their representation diminished in three occupations: physician assistant (3.1%, down from 4.5% of the current workforce); physical therapist, (3.3%, down from 3.35%) and speech language pathologist, (3.9%, down from 4.7%) of the current workforce. Representation among White graduates declined in each of the 10 occupations under review, thus realigning their representation with the population they represent (Salsberg et al., 2021). See Table 19 for the representation in healthcare occupations among the workforce and graduates, 2019.)

Table 19: Representation in Healthcare Occupations Among Workforce and Graduates

Occupation	White		Black		Native American		Hispanic	
	Current Workforce	Grad	Current Workforce	Grad	Current Workforce	Grad	Current Workforce	Grad
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	79.4	63.7	7.3	14.2	0.3	0.5	5.5	11.4
Dentist	68.7	56.5	4.4	4.9	0.1	0.3	5.7	9.8
Pharmacist	65.4	53.3	7.5	9.5	0.2	0.4	3.7	6.6
Physician	62.4	59.5	5.2	5.8	0.1	0.4	6.9	8.5
Physician Assistant	75.9	77.2	4.5	3.1	0.5	0.3	7.3	7.8
Occupational Therapist	80.5	78.2	6.1	4.2	0.2	0.2	5.2	7.7
Physical Therapist	76.7	76.1	3.3	3.2	0	0.3	3.3	7.1
Respiratory Therapist	66.3	54.3	11.4	13.3	0.9	0.7	10.8	19.0
Speech Language Pathologist	84.4	79.1	4.7	3.9	0.5	0.4	6.4	10.6
Registered Nurse	68.9	65.2	11.3	11.3	0.4	0.6	7.8	13.6

Note. Adapted from Salsberg, E., Richwine, C., Westergaard, S., Martinez, M. P., Oyeyemi, T., Vichare, A., Chen, C. P. (2021). Estimation and comparison of current and future racial/ethnic representation in the US health care workforce. *JAMA Netw Open.*, 4(3). <https://doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.3789>

A Historical Context for Occupational Segregation

People of African ancestry have been subjected to explicit and implicit racial discrimination dating back to their emancipation from slavery. Not only were they relegated to menial jobs, post emancipation, they were subjected to government-sponsored segregation through the institutionalization of *Jim Crow* laws. We can see the effect throughout this 21st century how the segregation of the federal government has affected jobs and salaries for federal workers, especially among people of African ancestry. While the passing of the Civil Rights Act and other civil rights legislation resulted in improvements for Black workers and their families, progress diminished as support for equality for all began to diminish toward the 21st century (Jardina et al., 2023).

Workplace desegregation for Blacks in 2002 was at the same level as it was in 1980. Jardina et al., (2023) pointed out how occupational segregation plays a significant role in depressing Black workers in the U.S. workforce. Specifically, Blacks were relegated to poorly compensated and less desirable occupations. These jobs are devaluated because people who hold these occupations are devaluated by society. The normalization of unequal pay for certain types of occupations legitimizes inequities within the system. Occupational segregation perpetuates the *glass ceiling* and *sticky floors* syndrome where Blacks are excluded from more desirable occupations and relegated to low status positions (Jardina et al., 2023). To determine the extent to which occupational segregation is present in local economies across the country, an environment of transparency would need to be established to engage in safe dialogue about the presence of racial inequities.

National trends are good indicators for what is taking place at the local level. Before making assumptions about the presence of occupational segregation taking place in Westchester, further research is needed to learn about occupational patterns among people who live and/or work in the county. However, the persistence of economic instability among people of African ancestry suggests the presence of barriers impeding their progress. Occupational segregation is among the likely impediments. In the next section we will discuss access to affordable housing and its impact on people of African ancestry.

The Affordable Housing Gap and its Impact on People of African Ancestry

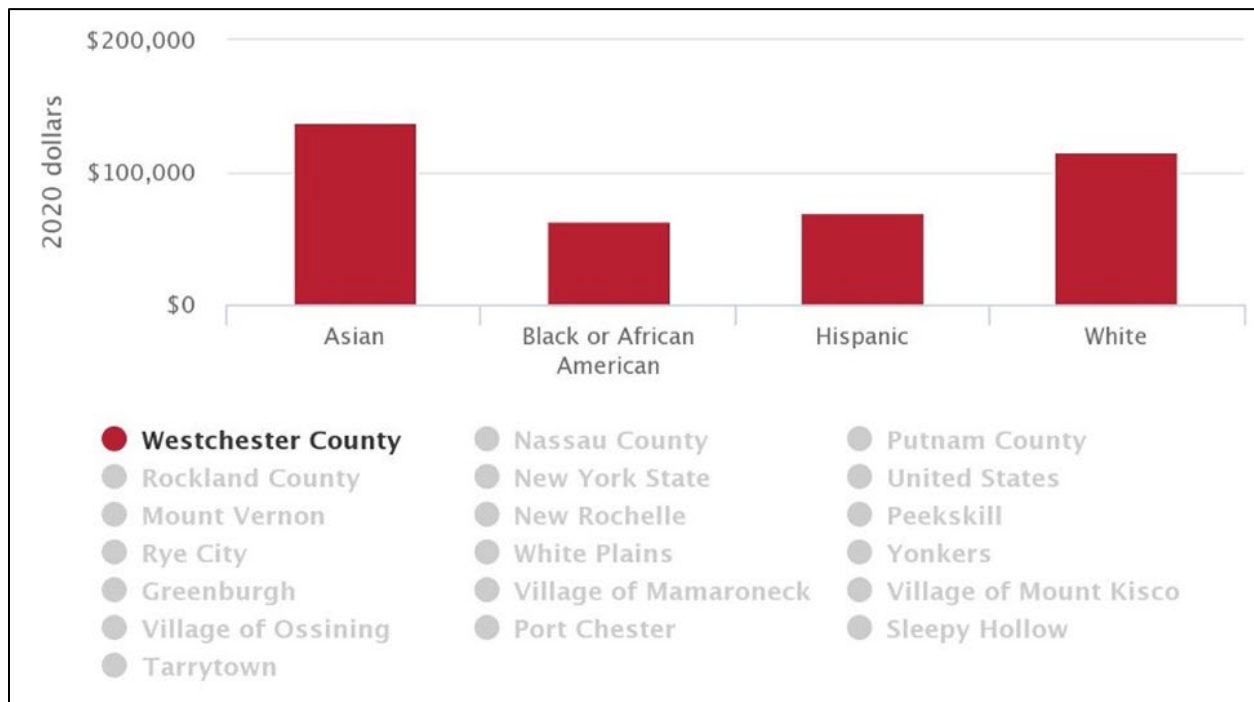
In an article in Westchester Magazine in 2008, Lawrence Otis Graham reflected on his young life in Westchester. He pointed out how the presence of African slaves at Philipsburg Manor in Sleepy Hollow dated back to the 1700s. Graham discussed how the 1920 census documented 11,066 African Americans living in Westchester County—1,350 in Mount Vernon, 998 in White Plains, 1,920 in Yonkers, and 2,600 in New Rochelle. Soon after the 1935 race riots in Harlem, Westchester realized an influx of physicians, dentists, small business owners, and civil service postal workers. These were among the first groups of African Americans to purchase homes in Westchester. By 1940 the Black population tripled to 31,346 of which 20% were members of Westchester's middle class.

Graham spoke of the difficulty his parents experienced when they attempted to move from their home in Mount Vernon to a more affluent community in Westchester County. Restrictive covenants barring White property owners from selling their homes to Blacks, peer-pressure from neighbors to not sell to Blacks, and racial steering among realtors were among the many obstacles African American families faced when searching for housing in communities that were predominately White middle-class communities (Graham, 2008). The passing of the 1968 Fair Housing Act significantly reduced racial discrimination in Westchester. Although redlining, steering, and other economic and racial obstacles have persisted over the last 40 years, the passing of this legislation has enabled people of African ancestry with the financial means to take advantage of securing housing in communities throughout Westchester County. While homeownership among this group lags homeownership among all other racial groups people of African ancestry still represent 37% of homeowners in Westchester (Westchester Community Foundation, 2022). This can be viewed as progress, given the obstacles to affordable housing that continue to exist. In this section we discuss four impediments to affordable housing for people of African ancestry: out of reach housing costs, limited geographic housing options, exclusionary zoning laws, and resistance among municipalities to embrace fair housing laws.

Out-of-Reach Housing Costs

According to the Office of the New York State Comptroller (2019), New York had the fourth highest percentage of renters among states in the country. The median value of an owner-occupied home between 2017 and 2021 was \$559,900. The median costs for a home with a mortgage during the same period was \$3,598 per month. The median gross rental cost between 2017 and 2021 was \$1,682 a month (U.S. Census, 2022). The average median income for people in Westchester between 2016 and 2020 by racial groups was \$137,800 for Asians, \$115,900 for Whites, people of African ancestry and Latino/Hispanic was \$69,100 and \$64,124, respectively (Westchester Community Foundation, 2022). (See Figure 4 for median income levels.)

Figure 4: Median Household Income, by Race/Ethnicity, 2016-20



Note. Reprinted from the Westchester Index, an initiative of the Westchester Community Foundation.
<https://westchesterindex.org/>

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (2019) used HUD's Cost Burden Analysis for its methodology to measure housing affordability among households in local jurisdictions. This methodology uses custom tabulations of data from the U.S. Census to gain insight into the

housing problems and needs of households living in rental and owner-occupied housing in local cities, towns, and villages. HUD's definition of cost burden is based on the percentage of family income as a percent of the Household Area Median Income for Families (HAMFI). According to HUD, levels of poverty are classified as families with:

- *Extremely Low Income* as households with income 30% below or at the HAMFI,
- *Very Low Income* as households with income 50% below or at the HAMFI and,
- *Low Income* as households with income below 80% below or at the HAMFI.

Household income at 80% and 100% of HAMFI are considered to have adequate income to comfortably pay housing costs. Housing costs for households, which includes costs for utilities, are also classified by HUD at three levels: *affordable*—households spending less than 30% of its income on housing costs; *unaffordable*—households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs; and *severely unaffordable*—households spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs. This methodology is used to provide insight into the housing cost burden of all municipalities in Westchester by level of income as a percentage of the HAMFI for Westchester.

The majority of people of African ancestry reside in six municipalities. It includes the cities of Mount Vernon, Yonkers, New Rochelle, and Peekskill; the town of Greenburgh; and the village of Ossining. In the case of the households of people of African ancestry who are living in owner-occupied housing, 39.6% live in housing above their ability to pay. They are classified as households with housing costs that are unaffordable or severely unaffordable, (20.9%) and (18.7%), respectively. (See Table 20 for the housing cost burden for Black homeowners in municipalities where they are most populated.)

Table 20: Housing Cost Burden for Black Homeowners in Westchester

Municipality	Affordable		Unaffordable		Severe	
	## HH	% of HH	# HH	%HH	# HH	% of HH
Mount Vernon	5,180	53.0%	2,370	24.3%	2,220	22.7%
Yonkers	21,735	62.7%	6,605	19.0%	6,335	18.3%
New Rochelle	8,585	61.2%	2,420	17.3%	3,020	21.5%
Peekskill	2,780	61.8%	945	21.0%	775	17.2%
Greenburgh	9,043	68.5%	2,251	17.1%	1,901	14.4%
Ossining	854	55.1%	416	26.8%	280	18.1%
Total Households	48,177	60.4%	15,007	20.9%	14,531	18.7%

Note. Reprinted from Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (2019). *Westchester County housing needs assessment: Research data analysis recommendations*. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

Based on HUD's Cost Burden Analysis, an average of 48.5% of households living in rental housing have housing costs that are unaffordable (23.6%) or severely unaffordable (24.9%). (See Table 21 for the housing cost burden for Blacks in rental households.)

Table 21: Housing Cost Burden for Blacks in Rental Households

Municipality	Affordable		Unaffordable		Severe	
	## HH	% of HH	# HH	%HH	# HH	% of HH
Mount Vernon	6,745	44.3%	3,440	22.6%	5,035	33.1%
Yonkers	19,220	50.1%	8,375	21.8%	10,805	28.1%
New Rochelle	6,550	46.0%	3,670	25.8%	4,030	28.2%
Peekskill	1,875	41.1%	1,015	22.2%	1,675	36.7%
Greenburgh	1,925	59.1%	634	19.5%	696	21.4%
Ossining	160	68.1%	70	29.8%	5	2.1%
Total Households	36,475	51.4%	17,204	23.6%	22,246	24.9%

Note. Reprinted from Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (2019). *Westchester County housing needs assessment: Research data analysis recommendations*. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

While more owner-occupied households (60%) have less of a housing burden than renters (51%), housing costs are out of reach for many households of African ancestry living in Westchester County.

Limited Geographic Housing Options

Having access to decent and affordable housing is essential for families to live, play, work, worship, and play out their unique role in achieving humanity. They benefit from living in diverse communities with a strong local economy to sustain resource-rich communities. Families thrive when they feel safe and respected as a valued part of their community. They benefit from having access to civic public spaces where residents can work collectively, learn about one another and act collectively to solve problems to make their world a better place. Families also need high-quality healthcare and access to high-resourced and high-performing educational systems. If all people had equal access to housing choices in these types of communities, it would be a microcosm of the population in the county. For example, if Westchester's White population represented 65% of the total population for the county, they should comprise 65% of residents in municipalities throughout Westchester. Residential housing patterns for people of African ancestry suggest their access to decent, affordable, and diverse housing options is significantly limited given their under and overrepresentation in communities throughout the county. One major barrier that limits access to decent affordable housing for people of African ancestry is searching for housing in a racially and economically segregated county.

The dissimilarity index (DI) is a methodology for measuring on a scale of 0 to 100, existing patterns of integration and segregation in neighborhoods. The lower the DI score signifies a more integrated community, and the higher score signifies a more segregated community. Based on the 2010 Decennial Census, the county of Westchester scored 64.3, classifying it as a highly segregated county (New York State Homes and Community Renewal, 2023). While the DI score for Westchester is among the lowest in the downstate region, it ranks high among its comparable suburban counties (Rockland and Suffolk counties) in the downstate area (New York State Homes and Community Renewal, 2023). (See Table 22 for downstate counties with DI scores for African ancestry and White subgroups.)

Table 22: Downstate Counties with DI Scores for African Ancestry/White Subgroups SWSCCN Communities-1-1

County Name	DI Score	Black/African American Population		White Population		Total Population of the County
		#	%	#	%	
Kings County	83.49	799,066	32	893,306	36	2,504,700
Queens County	81.15	395,881	18	616,727	28	2,230,722
Nassau County	77.2	141,305	11	877,309	65	1,339,532
Bronx County	72.56	416,695	30	151,209	11	1,385,108
Richmond County	72.53	44,313	9	300,169	64	468,730
New York County	70.73	205,340	13	761,493	48	1,585,873
Westchester County	64.31	126,585	13	544,563	57	949,113
Suffolk County	59.64	102,117	7	1,068,728	72	1,493,350
Rockland County	59.06	34,623	11	203,670	65	311,687

Note. New York State Homes and Community Renewal. (April 2023). *Fair housing matter NY: An assessment of fair housing in New York State report*. New York State of Opportunity. <https://hcr.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/05/2023-fair-housing-matters-ny-public-cmt-draft-june-16-deadline.pdf>

An examination of Westchester shows a county divided by racial and economic lines. For example, according to the 2013-2017 ACS, the population for Westchester was estimated at 975,321, of which 142,397 (14.6%) were people of African ancestry (Westchester County Department of Health, 2023). Although this group represented 15% of Westchester’s total population, 77% of this subgroup lived in five of Westchester’s six central cities. The vast majority, lived in Mount Vernon 45,832 (32.2%) and Yonkers, 35,737 (25%). This group also lived in New Rochelle (15,941), White Plains (7,324), and Peekskill (5,148). (See Table 23 for residential housing patterns for people of African ancestry living in five cities.)

Table 23: Residential Housing Patterns in Five Central Cities 2017

	Municipality	Total Population of Residents	Total Population of Black Residents	% of the Local Municipality	% of Westchester's Black Population
	Westchester County		142,397		14.6%
	Mount Vernon	68,671	45,832	66.7%	32.2%
	New Rochelle	79,877	15,941	20.0%	11.2%
Cities (5)	Peekskill	24,111	5,148	21.4%	3.6%
	White Plains	58,404	7,324	12.5%	5.1%
	Yonkers	200,999	35,737	17.8%	25.1%
					77.2%

Note. Adapted from Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress. (2019). *Westchester County housing needs assessment: Research data analysis recommendations*. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

Residential housing patterns also show 13% of people of African ancestry live in Westchester's towns. While an estimated 7% of the county's Black population live in the town of Greenburgh, they comprise 21% of Greenburgh's residents. In Ossining, this group represents 9% of the Black residents and in Cortlandt, 7%. In six towns they represent less than 5% of the residents and in six towns they represent less than 3% of all residents in those municipalities. (See Table 24 for residential housing patterns for people of African ancestry living in towns.)

Table 24: Residential Housing Patterns in Towns 2017-2019

	Municipality	Total Population of Residents	Total Population of Black Residents	% of the Local Municipality	% of Westchester's Black Population
	Westchester				142,397
	Bedford	17,955	744	4.1%	0.5%
	Cortlandt	32,304	2,104	6.5%	1.5%
	Eastchester	20,099	311	1.5%	0.2%
	Greenburgh	45,044	9,219	20.5%	6.5%
	Harrison	28,319	1,288	4.5%	0.9%
	Lewisboro	12,741	423	3.3%	0.3%
Towns (15)	Mamaroneck	12,319	169	1.4%	0.1%
	Mount Pleasant	36,812	1,632	4.4%	1.1%
	New Castle	18,035	320	1.8%	0.2%
	North Castle	12,309	275	2.2%	0.2%
	North Salem	5,205	182	3.5%	0.1%
	Ossining	5,555	475	8.6%	0.3%
	Pound ridge	5,230	78	1.5%	0.1%
	Somers	21,448	262	1.2%	0.2%
	Yorktown	36,900	1,585	4.3%	1.1%
	% of Residents				13.4%

Note. Adapted from Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (2019). *Westchester County housing needs assessment: Research data analysis recommendations*. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

There are 22 villages in Westchester. The villages where people of African ancestry are most represented are Elmsford (22%), Ossining (16%), and Pelham Manor (12%). People of African ancestry, represent less than 5% of the residents in 13 villages and less than 3% in six villages: Larchmont, Rye Brook, Ardsley, Bronxville, Scarsdale, and Irvington. (See Table 25 for residential housing patterns for people of African ancestry living in villages.)

Table 25: Residential Housing Patterns in Villages 2017-2019

	Municipality	Total Population of Residents	Total Population of Black Residents	% of the Local Municipality	% of Westchester's Black Population
	Elmsford	4,942	1,079	21.8%	0.8%
	Ossining	25,386	4,014	15.8%	2.8%
	Pelham Manor	7,016	834	11.9%	0.6%
	Tuckahoe	6,656	536	8.1%	0.4%
	Mamaroneck	19,327	1,362	7.0%	1.0%
	Croton-on-Hudson	8,257	563	6.8%	0.4%
	Dobbs Ferry	11,141	677	6.1%	0.5%
	Mount Kisco	10,994	602	5.5%	0.4%
	Tarrytown	11,534	621	5.4%	0.4%
	Port Chester	29,623	1,384	4.7%	1.0%
Villages (22)	Buchanan	2,255	97	4.3%	0.1%
	Hasting-on-Hudson	7,993	337	4.2%	0.2%
	Sleepy Hollow	10,190	419	4.1%	0.3%
	Pleasantville	7,275	258	3.5%	0.2%
	Briarcliff	7,864	259	3.3%	0.2%
	Pelham	5,634	171	3.0%	0.1%
	Larchmont	6,111	144	2.4%	0.1%
	Rye Brook	9,543	210	2.2%	0.1%
	Ardsley	4,557	88	1.9%	0.1%
	Bronxville	6,428	62	1.0%	0.0%
	Scarsdale	17,856	161	0.9%	0.1%
	Irvington	6,588	24	0.4%	0.0%
	% of Residents				9.8%

Note. Adapted from Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (2019). *Westchester County housing needs assessment: Research data analysis recommendations*. <https://homes.westchestergov.com/images/stories/HNA/1125fullrep.pdf>

The explanation for the existence of racial and economically segregated communities is that it is by choice. People like living with people who look like themselves, share the same

values and view the world from comparable points of view. While choice and affordability do play a role in where people decide to live, policies and practices have exacerbated the shaping of municipal borders along racial and economic lines and these policies and practices have limited the geographic housing options for people of African ancestry in Westchester County. Kahlenberg (2023) refers to this phenomenon *as walls we don't see*. He uses this analogy to describe how *snob zoning* leads to racial and economic segregation. This next section discusses how the use of zoning laws have exacerbated these racially and economically residential housing patterns in municipalities throughout Westchester County.

Exclusionary Zoning Laws and its Impact on Access to Affordable Housing

Westchester has had a long-standing history of having exclusionary zoning laws which have resulted in housing patterns shaped along racial and economic lines.

In Part I, we discussed the landmark lawsuit brought by the Anti-Discrimination Center (ADC) and its 2007 settlement agreement with Westchester County government. In 2021, the ADC appealed to the U.S. District Court to force Westchester to adhere to its 2007 landmark settlement agreement. Specifically, ADC wanted to force the county to sue those municipalities who continued to enforce zoning laws that prohibit the building of affordable multifamily developments within its jurisdictions. ADC also claimed the county's commitment to build 750 units in some of the wealthiest communities were in fact built in communities that have built their fair share of affordable housing. ADC claimed that units which have been built in wealthy communities, were built in isolated clusters or in remote locations (Lungariello, 2021). This complaint by the ADC suggests that since the original settlement in 2007, 16 years later, exclusionary laws in Westchester continue to diminish the county's ability to increase and extend affordable housing options for anyone interested in living in Westchester County.

Continued Resistance from Local Officials to Enforce Existing Fair Housing Laws

As a result of the 2017 ruling by the Trump administration Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to exonerate the County for ignoring patterns of segregated housing development, the County was no longer obligated to focus its attention on eradicating barriers to fair and affordable housing for all. The County was authorized to limit its efforts to creating affordable housing. This ruling served as a major setback for Westchester and for people of

African ancestry. This is evidenced by the limited housing development of affordable housing in municipalities where people of African ancestry and other disenfranchised groups continue to be grossly underrepresented.

This ongoing resistance on the part of local municipalities to embrace existing laws under the Fair Housing Act makes it difficult to address the need for and access to affordable housing. For example, in 2021, the town of Eastchester settled a lawsuit brought by the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) over the administration of the town's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. It limited access to available housing to non-residents, many of whom were likely Black and Latino families applying for units in the town. Also in Eastchester, in 2019, developers of a new senior center rental were required by the town of Eastchester to sign a restrictive covenant that mandated residential preference for applicants. It was not until the FHJC filed a preliminary injunction against the town did Eastchester agree to withdraw its demands to the developer to apply residency preferences as part of its application process (FHJC, 2021).

In 2017 the town of Bedford settled a lawsuit by agreeing to rewrite its zoning code and pay \$165,000 in monetary damages to the FHJC. The settlement was as the result of a lawsuit filed by the Westchester Residential Opportunities (WRO) and FHJC against Bedford and Blue Mountain Housing Development Corp, the town's affordable housing affiliate. The code allowed for the prioritization of applications for affordable housing to people who live and/or work within the town's jurisdiction. According to the lawsuit, the zoning ordinance discriminated against African Americans who did not live or work within the town. Part of the settlement required the town to amend its zoning code to remove preferences for residents who want to live in middle-income housing (Westchester Residential Opportunities, 2018).

In her book, *Race for Profit*, Yamahtta Taylor (2019) discusses how zoning ordinances continue to exacerbate the presence of segregated housing patterns and the impact this is having on homeowners as well as on renters. No doubt county government has made headway in working with local municipalities to redesign their zoning laws to make way for affordable housing. However, the continued presence of the many municipalities where people of African

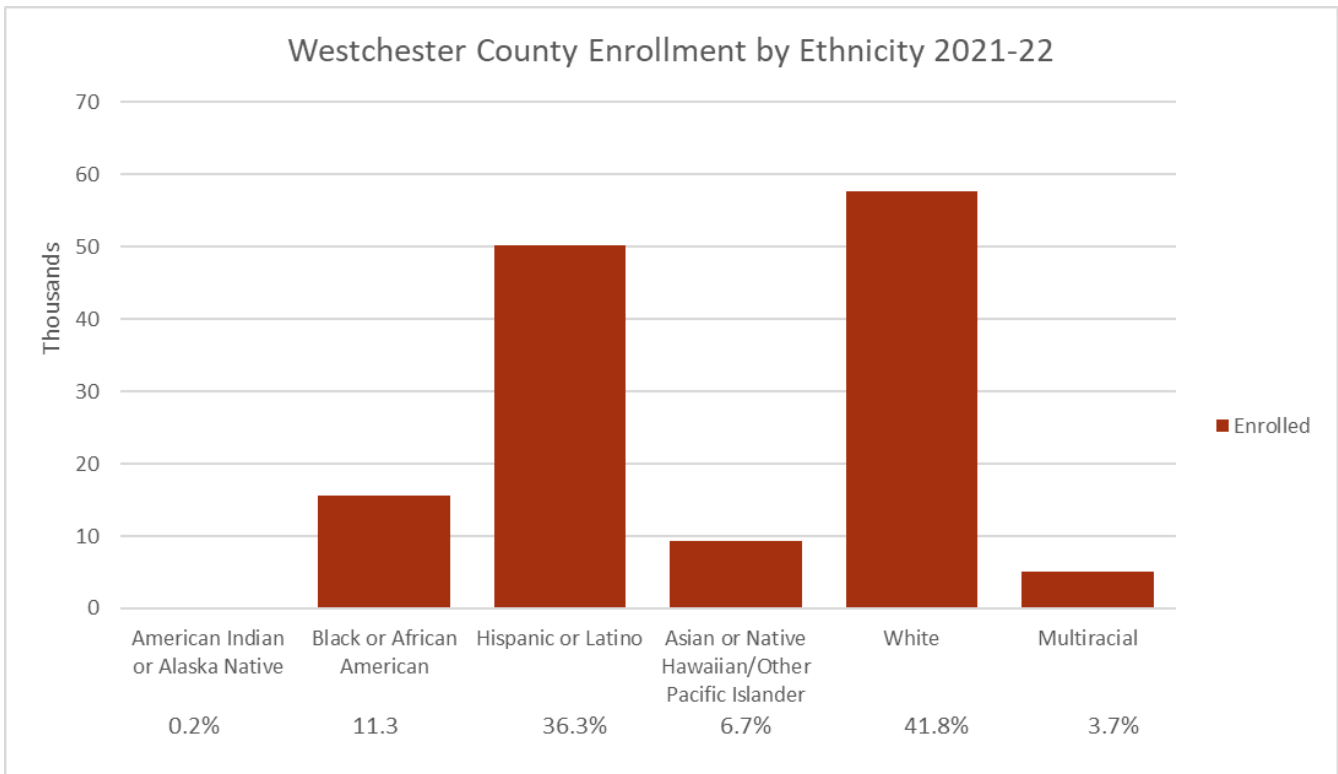
descent are underrepresented, reinforces the reality that much more needs to be accomplished to increase their geographic options for affordable housing.

In this section we discussed how out of reach housing costs, limited geographic housing options, exclusionary zoning laws and continued resistance from local municipalities to enforce existing fair housing laws have been impediments to people of African ancestry gaining access to affordable housing in Westchester. In the next session, we will examine how zoning has also exacerbated disparities in Westchester's public-school districts being realized by people of African ancestry.

Inequities in Public Schools and its Impact on Students of African Ancestry

Students of African ancestry represent the third largest racial/ethnic group (11%) enrolled in Westchester’s public schools. They are preceded by White students (42%) and Hispanic/Latino students (36%) and followed by Asian or Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander and multiracial groups, (7%) and (4%) respectively. (See Figure 5 for student enrollment by ethnicity, 2021-2022.)

Figure 5: Westchester County Enrollment by Ethnicity, 2021-2022



Note. Reprinted from the Westchester Index, an initiative of the Westchester Community Foundation. <https://westchesterindex.org/>

To gain insight into the extent to which a two-tier system exists in the Westchester public school system, we examined school districts in four municipalities where there was a large representation of people of African ancestry—Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains,

and Yonkers. The average household income within which these children reside was \$70,488. We also examined wealthy school districts in municipalities where people of African ancestry represented less than 5% of the residents. These municipalities included the city of Rye and the villages of Bronxville, Briarcliff, and Scarsdale. Students attending public schools in these municipalities came from predominantly White households where the average household income was \$196,542. The average household income gap between these two types of municipalities was \$126,094 (Westchester County Department of Planning, 2017). (See Table 26 for a comparison of household income.)

Table 26: Comparison of Household Income 2013 - 2017

Municipality	HH Median Income	Municipality	HH Income	HH Income Gap
Mount Vernon	\$54,573	Bronxville	\$205,781	
New Rochelle	\$77,320	Briarcliff	\$157,963	
White Plains	\$87,500	Scarsdale	\$250,000	
Yonkers	\$62,399	Rye	\$172,422	
Average Household Income	\$70,448		\$196,542	
HH Median Income Gap				\$126,094

Note. Reprinted from Westchester County Department of Planning. (2010). American Community Survey on Median Income, 2013. <https://planning.westchestergov.com/images/stories/Census/medhsgfaminc.pdf>

An Examination of High/Average and Low/No-Needs School Districts

Districts located in poorer communities served an estimated 65.5% of economically disadvantaged students. These districts were classified as high/average-needs school districts. In comparison, the wealthier school districts served on average, 2.5% of students who were classified as economically disadvantaged. These districts were classified as low/no-needs school districts. The average economic disadvantaged gap between these two types of districts was 63%. (See Table 27 for economically disadvantaged students in high/average and low/no-need needs school districts.)

Table 27: Economically Disadvantaged Students in High/Average and Zero to Low Needs Districts

Municipality High Need	# Students Enrolled in Public Schools	% Economically Disadvantaged in High Needs Districts	Municipality Low Need	# Students Enrolled	% Economically Disadvantaged in Low to No Needs Districts	Gap in % of Economically Disadvantaged Students
Mount Vernon	6,667	75.0%	Bronxville	1,559	4.0%	
New Rochelle	9,920	56%	Briarcliff	1,337	4.0%	
White Plains	6,713	53.0%	Scarsdale	4,605	0.0%	
Yonkers	24,055	78.0%	Rye	2,913	2.0%	
Average		65.5%			2.5%	
Gap						63.0%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Differences in Resources

When we examined resources available to students in high/average-need and low /no-need school districts, there were disparities worth mentioning. For example, for 2021-2022, in high/average-need school districts, the average student-to-teacher ratio was 14 and the average per-pupil expenditure was \$27,772. (See Table 28 for resources in high/average-needs school districts.)

Table 28: Resources in High/Average-Need Districts 2021-2022

Name of School District	Total Number of Students enrolled	Student to Teacher Ratio	% of Teachers with fewer than 4- Years of Experience	% Teachers with 4 - 20 Years of Experience	% Teachers with More than 20 Years Experience	Per Pupil Expenditure
Yonkers	22,973	17	5%	46%	49%	\$21,549
Mount Vernon SD	6,667	13	10%	62%	28%	\$31,456
New Rochelle	9,920	15	9%	58%	33%	\$26,720
White Plains	6,713	12	12%	50%	37%	\$31,362
Total # of Students	46,273					
Average for High/Avg. Needs Districts		14	9%	54%	37%	\$27,772

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

In low/no need-school districts, the average student-to-teacher ratio was 11.5 and the average per-pupil expenditure was \$31,795. (See Table 29 for resources in low/no need districts 2021-2022.)

Table 29: Gap in Resources in Low/No-Need Districts 2021-2022

School District Type	Student to Teacher Ratio	% of Teachers with Fewer than 4 Years Experience	% of Teachers with 4-20 years of Experience	% of Teachers with More than 20 Years Experience	Per Pupil Expenditure
Average gap for Low/No Needs District	11.5	8.75%	48%	43.5%	\$31,795
Average gap for High/Avg. Needs Districts	14.0	9%	54%	37%	\$27,772
Average Gap in Resources	2.5	0.25%	6%	7%	\$4,023

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

The gap between the student-to-teacher ratio in high/average school districts and low/no-needs districts was 2.5 students, (14 to 1 student/teacher ratio) and (11.5 student to teacher ratio) respectively. The per-pupil expenditures between high/average and low/no-needs school districts were \$4,023, (\$31,795) and (\$27,772) respectively. (See Table 30 for resources in low/no need districts 2021-2022.)

Table 30: Resources in Low/No-Need Districts 2021-2022

Name of School District	Total Number of Students Enrolled	Student to Teacher Ratio	% of Teachers with fewer than 4 Years Experience	% of Teachers with 4-20 years of Experience	% of Teachers with 20+Years Experience	Per Pupil Expenditure
Briarcliff Manor UFSD	1,337	11	6%	41%	53%	\$33,462.00
Bronxville UFCD	1,559	14	4%	59%	37%	\$29,681.00
Rye	2,913	10	7%	54%	40%	\$31,556.00
Scarsdale UFCD	4,605	11	18%	38%	44%	\$32,482.00
Total Number of Students	10,414					
Average for Low/No Needs District		11.5	8.75%	48%	43.5%	\$31,795.25

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Differences in Student Performance

In accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the New York State Office of Assessment coordinates the implementation of the NYS Testing Program. It requires public school district officials to administer a series of tests to students attending K-12 public and charter schools. These exams are designed to measure the extent to which students have acquired the critical thinking and problem-solving skills they need to successfully advance through the system and graduate from high school, equipped with the skills to become meaningfully engaged in society (New York State Education Department, 2020).

Student performance on these exams is measured on a scale of 1 to 4. Students who score a Level 1 are classified as performing below standard. Students who score a Level 2 are classified as partially meeting standards. Students who achieve a Level 3 have demonstrated a solid understanding of the subject and are classified as proficient. Students who score a Level 4 are classified as having achieved proficiency above expectations in the subject area (New York State Education Department, 2020).

To determine student performance in the two types of districts we conducted an analysis of the 2021 and 2022 test scores of students enrolled in low/no-need school districts and students enrolled in high/average-need school districts. Specifically, we examined test scores for third-grade students who took the exam for New York State English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and exams for fourth-grade students who took the NYS exam for science. We also examined the graduation rate for students graduating from these two types of school districts. Our findings below show a stark disparity in student performance.

Student Performance in 3rd Grade English Language Arts (ELA)

Findings for students in high/average needs school districts who took the ELA exam in calendar year 2021-2022 show, on average, that 40.5% had a solid understanding of the subject matter or exceeded expectations (36.5%) and (4%), respectively. On average, 38% of students scored a Level 2, demonstrating they had some understanding of the subject matter and therefore achieved partial proficiency. On average, 22% of all children who took the ELA exam scored a Level 1, demonstrating their understanding of the subject area was below the state

standard. (See Table 31 for proficiency levels in ELA for 3rd graders in high/average needs school districts.)

Table 31: Proficiency Levels in ELA for 3rd Grade Students in High/Average Needs School Districts 2021-2022

Name of School District	Total # of Students in Grade 3	# of Students Economically Disadvantaged	# of Students Tested	% of Students Proficient at Level 1	% of Students Proficient at Level 2	% of Students Proficient at Level 3	% of Students Proficient at Level 4
Yonkers CSD	1,840	1,314	1,716	24%	37%	35%	4%
New Rochelle CSD	731	402	578	18%	38%	29%	15%
Mount Vernon CSD	503	379	433	20%	37%	39%	4%
White Plains CSD	500	267	420	19%	39%	38%	4%
Total	3,574	2,362	3,147				
Percent Average				21.5%	38.0%	36.5%	4.0%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Findings for students in low/no-needs school districts who took the ELA exam in calendar year 2021-2022 show that on average, 87% had a solid understanding of the subject matter or exceeded expectations (63%) and (24%), respectively. On average, 12% of students who scored a Level 2 had some understanding of the subject matter and therefore partially achieved proficiency. On average, 1% of all children who took the ELA exam scored a Level 1, with a demonstrated performance below state standard. (See Table 32 for proficiency levels in ELA for 3rd graders in low/no needs school districts.)

Table 32: Proficiency Levels in ELA for 3rd Grade Students in Low/No Needs School Districts

Name of School District	Total # of Students in Grade 3	# of Students Economically Disadvantaged	# of Students Tested	% of Student Proficient at Level 1	% of Students Proficient at Level 2	% of Students Proficient at Level 3	% of Students Proficient at Level 4
Briarcliff Manor UFSD	94	2	92	1%	20%	60%	20%
Bronxville UFSC	110	3	108	2%	5%	65%	29%
Scarsdale UFSD	298	0	286	1%	6%	65%	28%
Rye UFSD	210	2	191	1%	18%	61%	20%
Total		7	477				
Average				1.3%	12.3%	62.7%	24.3%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

On average, students in low/no-need school districts scored higher on their ELA exam. For example, while the average test score for students who scored at or above proficiency was 87%, 62.7% and 24% respectively, students in high/average-need school districts who scored at or above proficiency was 40.5%, 36.5%, and 4% respectively. This represents a 46.5% gap in student proficiency among students in low/no-need and high/average-need school districts. (See Table 33 for achievement gap in ELA test scores for high/average-need and low/no-need school districts.)

Table 33: Achievement Gap in ELA Test Scores in High/Avg-Need and Low School Districts, 2021-2022

School District Type	# of Students Tested	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Achieved Proficiency
High/Avg School Districts	3,574	21.5%	38.0%	36.5%	4.0%	40.5%
Low/No-Need School Districts	712	1.3%	12.3%	62.7%	24.3%	87.0%
Gap in Achievement Levels						46.5%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Student Performance in 3rd Grade Math

Findings from our analysis on students in low/no-need school districts who took the math exam show on average, that 86% had a solid understanding of the subject matter and either achieved proficiency (36%) or exceeded expectations (50%). Twelve percent of students had some understanding of the subject matter and partially achieved proficiency. On average, 4% of students who took the math exam demonstrated that their knowledge of the subject matter was below standard. (See Table 34 for proficiency levels in math for 3rd grade students in low/no need school districts, 2021-2022.)

**Table 34: Proficiency Levels in Math for 3rd Grade Students in Low/No-Needs School Districts
2021-2022**

Name of School District	Total # of Students in Grade 3	% of Students Tested	% of Students Proficient at Level 1	% of Students Proficient at Level 2	% of Students Proficient at Level 3	% of Students Proficient at Level 4
Briarcliff Manor UFSD	94	2	92	4%	22%	32%
Bronxville UFSC	111	3	108	1%	6%	40.0%
Scarsdale UFSD	298	0	288	3%	5%	32%
Rye UFSD	210	2	189	7%	13%	38%
Total	713	7	677			
Average				3.75%	11.5%	35.5%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Forty-three percent of students in high/average-need school districts who took the math exam demonstrated a solid understanding of the subject matter and either achieved proficiency, Level 3 (27%), or exceeded expectations, Level 4 (16%). Twenty-nine percent of students had some understanding of the subject matter and partially achieved proficiency—Level 2. On average, 31% of students who took the math exam demonstrated that their knowledge of the subject matter was below standard—Level 1. (See Table 35 for proficiency levels in math for 3rd grade students in high/average school districts in 2021-2022.)

Table 35: Proficiency Levels in Math for 3rd Grade Students in High/Avg School Districts 2021-2022

Name of School District	Total # of Students in Grade 3	# of Students Economically Disadvantaged	Number of Students Tested	% of Students Proficient at Level 1	% of Students Proficient at Level 2	% of Students Proficient at Level 3	% of Students Proficient at Level 4
Mount Vernon SD	500	377	433	32%	28%	28%	11%
Yonkers CSD	1,842	1312	1,737	34%	29%	25%	13%
New Rochelle CSD	739	394	600	26%	29%	29%	16%
White Plains CSD	501	267	440	30%	28%	24%	18%
Total	3,582	2,350	3,210				
Average				31%	28%	27%	16%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Math test scores in the two types of districts were significantly different. For example, 85% of students in low/no-need school districts who took the math exam achieved proficiency (35.5%) or exceeded expectations (49.5%). In contrast, 43% of students in high/average-need school districts who took the math exam achieved proficiency (27%) or exceeded expectations (16%). This represents a 42% gap in student proficiency in high/average and low/no-need school districts. (See Table 36 for achievement gaps in math test scores for 3rd grade students in high/average school districts and low/no need school districts 2021-2022.)

Table 36: Achievement Gap in Math Scores for 3rd Graders in High and Low Need Districts

School District Type	# of Students Tested	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Achieved proficiency
High/Avg School Districts	3,210	32.0%	28.5%	27.0%	16.0%	43.0%
Low/No-Need School Districts	477	3.8%	12.0%	35.5%	49.5%	85.0%
Total # of 3rd Grade Students	3,687					
Gap in Achievement Levels						42.0%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Student Performance in 4th Grade Science

On average, 77% of students in the high/average-need school district who took the 4th grade science exam achieved proficiency (40%) or exceeded expectations (37%). Sixteen percent of students scored at Level 2 and 8% did not meet the standard. (See Table 37 for proficiency levels in science for fourth grade students in high/average-need districts.)

**Table 37: Proficiency Levels in Science for 4th Grade Students in High/Avg School Districts
2021-2022**

Name of School District	Total # of Students in Grade 4	% of Students Tested	% of Students Proficient at Level 1	% of Students Proficient at Level 2	% of Students Proficient at Level 3	% of Students Proficient at Level 4
Mount Vernon SD	501	90%	10%	21%	38%	31%
Yonkers CSD	1,758	93%	11%	16%	39%	35%
New Rochelle CSD	734	81%	5%	15%	39%	42%
White Plains CSD	494	91%	7%	11%	43%	39%
Total	3,487	89%	8%	16%	40%	37%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

On average, 97% of fourth grade students in low/no need districts who took the science exam achieved proficiency (17%) or exceeded expectations (80%). Seven percent of fourth graders who took the exam scored at Level 2 and 1% did not meet the standard. (See Table 38 for proficiency levels in science for 4th grade students in low/no need school districts.)

Table 38: Proficiency Levels in Science for 4th Grade Students in Low/No-Need School Districts 2021-2022

Name of School District	Total # of Students in Grade 4	% of Students Tested	% of Students Proficient at Level 1	% of Students Proficient at Level 2	% of Students Proficient at Level 3	% of Students Proficient at Level 4
Briarcliff Manor UFSC	80	96%	0%	4%	17%	79%
Bronxville UFSC	108	99%	3%	0%	10%	87%
Scarsdale UFSD	380	93%	0%	1%	16%	82%
Rye UFSD	234	94%	0%	2%	25%	73%
Total	802					
Average		95.5%	1%	7%	17%	80%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Students in the low/no need school districts who took the 4th grade science exam did significantly better than students in the high/average-need school districts. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of students in low/no-need districts achieved proficiency (17%) or exceeded expectations (80%). In comparison, on average, 77% of students in high/average-need school districts, were proficient (40%) in the subject area or exceeded expectations (37%). This represented a 20% gap in proficiency for students in high/average and low/no-need school districts. (See Table 39 for the achievement gap in science scores for 4th graders in high/average and low/no-need school districts.)

**Table 39: Achievement Gap in Science Scores for 4th Graders in High/
Avg and Low/No Need Districts**

School District Type	Number of Students in Grade 4 Tested	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Achieved Proficiency
High/Avg-Need School Districts	3,487	8.0%	16.0%	40.0%	37.0%	77.0%
Low/No-Need School Districts	802	1.0%	7.0%	17.0%	80.0%	97.0%
Total Number of 4th Grade Students	4,289					
Gap in Achievement Levels						20.0%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

Graduation Rate for Seniors

In 2022, there were 11,324 students who graduated from high school in public school districts in Westchester County. Students were eligible to receive four diplomas. They could have earned a Regents Diploma with Advanced Placement, a Regents Diploma without advanced placement, a Local Diploma or a Non-Credentialed Diploma. Outgoing students could also have been classified as being still enrolled, receiving a GED transfer, or having dropped out of high school. For this analysis, we examined the graduation rate for students earning a Regents Diploma or a Regent’s Diploma with Advanced Placement. We also examined students who were still enrolled and the rate for students who dropped out of high school.

In August 2022, 3,698 students graduated from the four school districts we examined in high/average-need school districts. On average, the graduation rate for these four school districts was 86.25%. This was lower than the 97% graduation rate for Westchester County and slightly lower than the 87% graduation rate for the State of New York. On average, 37% received a Regents Diploma with Advanced Placement and 49% received a Regents Diploma. The percentage of students still enrolled was 10% and the dropout rate was slightly higher than Westchester County’s 2% and lower than the 5% dropout rate for NYS. (See Table 40 for graduation rates for high school seniors in high/average-need school districts.)

Table 40: Graduation Rates for HS Seniors in High/Average-Need School Districts 2022

	# of Graduates in High-Need Districts	Graduation Rate	Regents with Advanced Placement (AP)	Regents Diploma	Still Enrolled	Drop-Out Rate
Westchester County	11,324	92%	24%	67%	6%	2%
New York State		87%	42%	45%	7%	5%
Mount Vernon SD	510	79%	23%	56%	18%	3%
Yonkers CSD	1,765	90%	30%	60%	7%	2%
New Rochelle CSD	817	84%	47%	36%	11%	5%
White Plains CSD	606	92%	49%	42%	4%	3%
Total # of County Graduates	3,698					
Averages Percentages		86.25%	37%	49%	10%	3%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

In August 2022, a total of 909 students graduated from the four school districts we examined in low/no-need school districts. On average, the graduation rate among these four school districts was 98%. This was higher than the 97% graduation rate for Westchester County and higher than the 87% graduation rate for the State of New York. On average, 17% of the graduates received a Regents Diploma with Advanced Placement, and 82% received a Regents Diploma. Note, Briarcliff was the only school district among those we examined in low/no-need school districts where students did not receive a Regents Diploma with Advanced Placement. The average percentage of students still enrolled was 2%. The average dropout rate was 0%, both lower than the dropout rates for Westchester and NYS, (2%) and (5%) respectively. (See

Table 41 for the graduation rate for high school seniors in low/no-need school districts, 2021-2022.)

Table 41: Graduation Rates for HS Seniors in Low/No-Need School Districts 2021-2022

	# of Graduates in Low-Need Districts	Graduation Rate	Regents with Advanced Placement (AP)	Regents Diploma	Still Enrolled	Drop-Out Rate
Westchester County	11,324	92%	24%	67%	6%	2%
New York State		87%	42%	45%	7%	5%
Briarcliff Manor UFSC	140	96%	66%	31%	4%	0%
Bronxville UFSC	123	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Scarsdale UFSD	381	99%	0%	99%	1%	0%
Rye UFSD	265	98%	0%	98%	2%	0%
Total # of Graduates	909	98%	17%	82%	2%	0%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

There was a 12% gap in the graduation rate between seniors in high/average-need school districts and low/no-need school districts (86.25% and (98%) respectively). In addition, there was a 3% gap in the dropout rate for these two types of districts. (See Table 42 for gaps in graduation rates for high school seniors in low-no and high/average-need school districts, 2021-2022)

Table 42: Gaps in Graduation Rates for HS Seniors in Low-No and High/Average-Need School Districts, 2021-2022

	Total High School Students	Graduation Rate	Regents with Advanced Placement (AP)	Regents Diploma	Still Enrolled	Drop-Out Rate	Achievement Gap Graduation Rate
Westchester County	11,324	92%	24%	67%	6%	2%	
New York State		87%	42%	45%	7%	5%	
High/Avg School Districts	3,698	86.25%	37%	49%	10%	3%	
Low/No-Need School Districts	909	98.25%	17%	82%	2%	0%	
Total # County of Graduates	4,607						
Achievement Gap							12%

Note. Adapted from data.nysed.gov, New York State School Data, 2021-2022.

In this section we examined low/no-need and high/average-need school districts to gain insight into educational experiences being realized by students in these two types of school districts. We examined the level of resources available for student learning and we examined student proficiency indicators for disparities in student performance. Findings revealed major gaps in resources available for student learning as well as gaps in student proficiency in core subjects—ELA, math, and science. We also found a gap in the graduation rate for high school seniors. Findings revealed the existence of disparities in resources and student performance in these two types of public school districts. In this next section we will discuss Westchester’s healthcare network and its impact on people of African ancestry.

The Westchester Healthcare Network and its Impact on People of African Ancestry

Westchester County is recognized as a place where most people are healthy. The lifespan of its residents is longer than the lifespan of residents in New York and longer than the national average. The quality of life it offers leads its resident to an enriched and healthy experience over the duration of their time living in Westchester. Westchester's network of healthcare services is an attractive feature for new businesses and its employees interested in moving to the Hudson Valley region. In this section we present findings from two databases for Westchester County—the County Health Ranking Model, designed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity, released by the New York State Department of Health. Findings from both databases reveal disparities in the state of health among people of African ancestry and the general population as well as disparities among people of African ancestry and other racial/ethnic groups in the county.

Findings from the County Health Ranking Model

In Part I of our report, we discussed how this model was used to rank Westchester as sixth out of 62 counties for having one of the top healthcare networks in the State of New York. While the County mostly scored higher than New York as well as above the national average, it did not produce as favorable health outcomes for residents who were of African ancestry. For example, one length of life outcome we examined was the value for lost years of life among people who died prematurely (before the age of 75). The value for lost years was 4,600 for Westchester's general population. In comparison, the value for lost years of life for people of African ancestry was 7,290 lost years of life. This represents a 2,690-year gap in the value for lost years of life between people of African ancestry and the general population. This translates into an average lifespan of 82.4 years for the general population and 78.8 years for people of African ancestry.

Another health outcome we examined were responses from residents who reported having birthed babies weighing less than 5.8 pounds between 2014 and 2020. Eight percent of respondents from the general population reported having birthed low-weight babies. This rate

(8%) was consistent with low-birth rates for New York and for the national average. On the other hand, 13% of respondents who were people of African ancestry reported having birthed low-weight babies during the same period—a 5% gap. (See Table 43 for Westchester County health outcomes and quality of life findings.)

We also examined several other health outcomes and health factors that measured the quality of life for people of Westchester. In most instances Westchester's scores were higher than New York State as well as better than the national average. Comparing responses from the general population to responses from people of African ancestry was a challenge. Many of the responses from people of African ancestry were not available. According to the researchers, some responses were unreliable or incomplete and as a result those responses were not included in the data. However, the responses that were available showed low scores for responses received from people of African ancestry. For example, between 2014 and 2020, the rate of teen births (ages 15 to 19) among the general population was eight teen births per 1,000 teens. In comparison, there were 11 teen births per 1,000 for young girls of African ancestry. (See Table 43.)

Table 43: Westchester County Health Outcomes and Quality of Life Findings

		Factors	Westchester	People of African Ancestry	New York	Natn'l
Health Outcomes	Length of Life					
		Premature Deaths Years of life lost prior to 75	4,600	7,290	6,000	7,300
	Quality of Life	Poor or fair health	10%		12%	12%
		Poor physical health days	2.5%		2.7%	3.0%
		Poor mental health days	4.2%		4.1%	4.4%
		Low birthweight under 5.8 Lbs	8%	13%	8%	8%
Additional Health Outcomes	Health Behaviors	Not included in Overall Survey Ranking				
		Adult Smoking	11%		12%	16%
		Adult Obesity	21%		27%	32%
		Food Environment Index	9.1		8.9	7.0
		Physical Inactivity	21%		25%	22%
		Access to Exercise	100%		93	94
		Excessive Drinking	17%		18%	19%
		Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	23%		20%	37%
		Sexually transmitted infections per 100,000	311.8		502.3	481.3
		Teen Births per 1,000 births ages 15-19	8	11	13	19
Additional Health Behaviors		Not included in Overall Survey Ranking				
		Preventable Hospital Visits	2,164	3,272	2,586	2,809
		Mammography Screening	39%	35%	37%	37%
Additional Clinical Care		Not included in Overall Survey Ranking				
		Injury Death Rate per 100,000	43	50	53	76
		Childhood Poverty Rate	11%	18%	19%	17%

Note: Blank values reflect unreliable or missing data. Reprinted from University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, (2023) County Health Rankings and Roadmaps <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/new-york/westchester?year=2023>

Healthcare outcomes and quality of life factors are essential indicators for measuring the state of health of people who live throughout Westchester. While Westchester ranked above New York and above the national average, there was a significant difference in the state of health among people of African ancestry.

Findings from the New York State Health Indicators

In addition to examining findings from the County Health Ranking for Westchester County, we examined an estimated 60 measurements from six categories of health indicators prepared by the NYS Department of Health. The categories include social demographic indicators, general health indicators, respiratory diseases indicators, heart disease and stroke indicators, diabetes indicators, and cancer indicators. Among the 60 measurements we examined, there were an estimated 13 where the rates for people of African ancestry were equally or healthier than other racial groups. The other 47 measurements showed the health of people of African ancestry was worse than all other racial groups. For example, chronic lower respiratory disease hospitalizations per 10,000 for people of African ancestry was 30.1%, versus 8.9% for Whites, 2.8% for Asian Pacific Islander, and 8.8% for Latino/Hispanics. For children of African ancestry, ages zero to 17 years, asthma hospitalizations per 10,000 was 25.1 children. In contrast, White children hospitalized for asthma was 4.5 per 10,000, Asian/Pacific Islander was 3.4, and 5.0 for Latino/Hispanic children. For potentially preventable hospitalizations per 10,000, the score for people of African ancestry was 191.3 in comparison to 55.5 for the White population, 23.3 for Asian/Pacific Islander and 53.8 for the Latino/Hispanic population. For diabetes (any diagnosis) hospitalization per 10,000, was 296 for persons of African ancestry. In comparison, there were 88.2 per 10,000 for White individuals hospitalized for the same illness, 63.6 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 15.9 Latino/Hispanic residents. These types of gaps were throughout the data we examined. (See Table 44 for examples of Westchester County major gaps in health indicators by race/ethnicity 2018-2020.)

Table 44: Westchester County Major Gaps in Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity 2018-2020

Health Indicator	White	Black	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic
Socio-Demographic Indicators				
% of families living below poverty	2.5	10.3	4.7	10.3
% of children under 18 below poverty 2017-2021	3.6	17.7	6.9	15.1
% of population in single parent families	5.7	29.7	5.5	21.3
General Health Indicators				
% of premature deaths <75	27	53	39.6	55.2
Potentially preventable hospitalizations per 10,000	55.7	191.3	25.3	53.8
Respiratory Disease Indicators				
Asthma hospitalizations per 10,000	2.6	16.1	1.6	3.9
Asthma hospitalizations per 10,000 ages 0-17	4.5	25.1	3.4	5.0
Chronic lower respiratory disease hospitalizations per 10,000	8.9	30.1	2.8	8.8
Heart Disease and Stroke Indicators				
Diseases of the heart mortality per 100,000 population	140.4	178.1	65.3	105.8
Diseases of the heart hospitalization per 100,000 population	43.8	79.7	20.9	32.5
Potentially preventable heart failure hospitalizations per 10,000 ages 18+	26.9	47.7	6.6	9.9
Diabetes Indicators				
Diabetes mortality per 100,000	9.3	28.6	10.1	18.7
Diabetes (primary diagnosis) hospitalizations per 10,000	6.4	32.0	3.0	9.1
Diabetes (any diagnosis) hospitalization per 10,000	88.2	296.0	63.6	115.9
Cancer Indicators				
Colorectal cancer mortality per 100,000	9.6	13.5	5.2	7.7
Female breast cancer mortality per 100,000	17.2	25.1	10.0	13.8

Note. Reprinted from New York State. (2023). *Westchester County Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity, 2018-2020.* <https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/westchester.htm>

In this section we examined findings from the County Health Ranking Model and the NYS Health indicators. We found disparities throughout both data bases. Our findings reveal how although Westchester County is recognized for having one of the best healthcare networks in the state of New York, the state of health among people of African ancestry was significantly worse than the general population. There were also several health outcomes where people of African ancestry were less healthy than residents of other racial groups.

Summary of Part II

This ends our assessment of the quality of life for people of African ancestry who live in Westchester County. It outlines how while progress has been made, people of African ancestry continue to lag behind the general population as well as behind all other ethnic groups in all wealth indicators. People of African ancestry continue to have the highest poverty rate, the highest unemployment rate, the lowest median income, and the highest rate of homelessness. They also have the lowest rate of homeownership. Since the 2010 study, Westchester County government established the Minority and Women-Owned Business Program. In spite of its efforts, between 2016 and 2022, only 3% of people of African ancestry are classified business owners. We describe major inequities in the areas of economic development, housing, education, and healthcare. Part III of this report is the Conclusion. It includes a Summary of Findings and Recommendations.

Part III: Conclusions

Summary of Findings

Despite the economic wealth possessed by Westchester County, the promise of an expanded economy and all the networks that make Westchester a unique place to live, our overall findings suggest many people of African ancestry run the risk of not fully contributing to and benefitting from all areas that make the county so vibrant. While there were many findings in this report, the four we present below are what we believe to be the most challenging barriers impacting the lives of people of African ancestry and their ability to self-actualize:

1. People of African ancestry are underrepresented in many industries and are subjected to occupational segregation. As a result, they are not meaningfully engaged in the economy and the potential for upward mobility is limited.

To understand the scope of racial inequities in the workforce, we searched national databases that track demographic and diversity patterns of workforces in U.S.-based industries. We were interested in understanding how people of African ancestry across the country were meaningfully engaged in the U.S. economy. Findings informed us of national trends being realized in local economies across the country and what might be taking place in Westchester County. Through the theoretical lens of occupational segregation, we examined workforces in two industries important to the Westchester economy—healthcare and construction. Findings from our national inquiry reveal that while people of African ancestry represent 12.5% of the total U.S. workforce, they represent an estimated 5% in major industries. For those active in the workforce, Black workers were overrepresented in labor intensive lower-paying occupations and underrepresented in management and other occupations that generate higher levels of compensation.

We also examined the workforces in the healthcare and construction industry. Findings from our examination of the health care industry show people of African ancestry represented 5% of the workforce. When we examined the top 10 healthcare occupations, although Black workers came close to being perfectly represented in two occupations; they were underrepresented in all of the 10 healthcare occupations examined. In addition, the increased number of Black students in the healthcare education pipeline showed promise for increased

representation among some of the top 10 healthcare occupations. For construction, Black workers also represented 5% of the construction workforce. They were overrepresented in hard labor occupations and underrepresented in occupations that lead to higher-paying management positions.

Being underrepresented in management and other higher-paying occupations diminishes the likelihood for upward mobility and acquiring generational wealth. This reality was evident in the low scores we found on the indicators for economic success for people of African ancestry in Westchester. This group ranked lowest among all racial/ethnic groups on their percentages of home and business ownership, (37%) and (3%), respectively. Owning properties and/or businesses are essential indicators for economic success. Occupational segregation makes both of these opportunities out of reach for many people of African ancestry.

2. There are four impediments for people of African ancestry having access to affordable and well racially balanced housing in Westchester. They include, out-of-reach housing costs, limited geographic housing options, exclusionary zoning laws, resistance among municipalities to build affordable housing and enforce fair housing laws in their communities.

People of African ancestry are subjected to the high costs of rental and homeownership housing. Based on HUD's Cost Burden Analysis, an average of 48.5% of rental households have housing costs that are unaffordable (23.6%) or severely unaffordable (24.9%). For homeownership households, 40% are classified by HUD as have housing costs that are unaffordable (20.9%) or severely unaffordable (18.7%).

In addition to out of reach housing costs, people of African ancestry are living under extreme segregated housing conditions in Westchester County. For example, although this group represents 17% of Westchester's population, 77% live in five of the six central cities, with the vast majority living in Mount Vernon (32.2%) and Yonkers, (25%). Limited geographic options make it difficult for people of African ancestry to move into municipalities beyond Westchester's central cities. For example, among 71% of Westchester's towns and villages, people of African ancestry comprise less than 5% of the residents in these municipalities.

Housing costs, exclusionary zoning laws and continued violations of Fair Housing laws are some of the causes for these segregated housing patterns. Finally, while County government has had some success in working with municipalities to eliminate exclusionary zoning laws and other barriers that lead to discrimination, this practice continues to exist in Westchester County.

3. Because public schools are funded largely by property taxes, a two-tier system for the delivery of services to children continues to exist—one serving resource-rich school districts catering to families in wealthy, high-income communities, and another system, serving resource-poor school districts catering to families in lower income communities.

To gain insight into the extent to which this two-tier system is impacting children of African descent, we examined school year 2021-2022, eight school districts—four located in municipalities with lower property values—and four school districts located in municipalities with high property values. Residents in municipalities with lower property values had a large representation of people of African ancestry. More than 95% of residents in the municipalities with higher property taxes were White. We were interested in knowing what resources were available for children’s learning in these two types of communities and how well they performed academically. Our findings revealed major disparities within this two-tier system and that students in the poorer communities were significantly impacted. We examined the level of resources available to school administrators and we examined student test scores on the NYS 3rd grade ELA and math exam and 4th grade science exam. We also examined the graduation rate among high school seniors.

Overall findings reveal a \$4,023 gap in per-pupil spending in districts located in the two types of communities and a 2.5% gap in the teacher to student ratio; a 46.5% gap in student proficiency in 3rd grade ELA; a 42% gap in student proficiency in 3rd grade math; a 20% gap in 4th grade science; and a 12% gap in the high school graduation rate.

4. Westchester’s ratings for producing favorable health outcomes for its residents is above New York and above the national average. Despite Westchester’s distinction, the lifespan and health outcome scores for people of African ancestry are significantly lower than the general population and all other racial groups.

Westchester County is recognized as a place where healthy people reside. The county ranks among the top counties in the state of New York for producing favorable healthcare outcomes among its residents. While Westchester ranked above New York and the above the national average for producing favorable health outcomes for its residents, health outcome scores for people of African ancestry were significantly lower. For example, the value for lost years of life among people who died prematurely (before the age of 75) was different for people of African ancestry and the general population—4,600 for Westchester’s general population, 7,290 lost years of life for people of African ancestry. This translates into an average lifespan of 82.4 years for the general population and 78.8 years for people of African ancestry.

Among the 60 measurements we examined for various health conditions, there were 47 measurements that showed the health of people of African ancestry was worse than all other racial groups. For example, chronic lower respiratory disease hospitalizations per 10,000 for people of African ancestry was 30.1%, versus 8.9% for Whites, 2.8% for Asian Pacific Islander, and 8.8% for Latino/Hispanics. For children of African ancestry, ages zero to 17 years, asthma hospitalizations per 10,000 was 25.1 children. In contrast, White children hospitalized for asthma was 4.5 per 10,000, Asian/Pacific Islander was 3.4, and 5.0 for Latino/Hispanic children. For potentially preventable hospitalizations per 10,000, the score for people of African ancestry was 191.3 in comparison to 55.5 for the White population, 23.3 for Asian/Pacific Islander and 53.8 for the Latino/Hispanic population. For diabetes (any diagnosis) hospitalization per 10,000, was 296 for persons of African ancestry. In comparison, there were 88.2 per 10,000 for White individuals hospitalized for the same illness, 63.6 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 15.9 Latino/Hispanic residents. These types of gaps were throughout the data we examined.

Although Westchester County is recognized for having one of the best healthcare networks in the state of New York, the state of health among people of African ancestry is significantly worse than the general population and among other racial/ethnic groups in Westchester. In final section below, we provide recommendations to respond to the inequities identified in this report.

Recommendations

The Blueprint for Change, 2nd edition, documents the quality of life for people of African ancestry living in Westchester County. It represents an update of findings from the first edition of Blueprint for Change released in 2010 by the AAAB. Recommendations in this section are designed to assist the AAAB in working with the Office of the County Executive and the Westchester County Board of Legislators to establish policies to improve the quality of life for all of its residents. This section includes 14 recommendations for how the AAAB might affect county-government policies and practices in its focus areas—economic development, housing, education, and health and human services.

Economic Development

Finding 1

People of African ancestry are underrepresented in the U.S.-based workforce and have been subjected to occupational segregation. While they represent 12.5% of the U.S.-based workforce, on average, they represent only 5% of the workforce in major industries. In addition, Black workers are overrepresented in labor intensive, lower-paying occupations and underrepresented in management and other occupations that generate higher levels of compensation. As a result, they are impeded from fully participating in the workforce.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support the County's effort to create and maintain a diverse workforce reflective of the Westchester's population. This includes collaborating with the Department of Human Resources to increase public awareness of its plan to achieve greater diversity among the county's workforce and to create equal access to all types of occupations, especially occupations that lead to managerial and leadership positions for people of African ancestry and other underrepresented groups.

2. Collaborate with the County Department of Planning and the Department of Economic Development. Recommend meaningful ways to establish, monitor, and measure how County-sponsored projects have executed policies and practices that lead to a diverse workforce reflective of Westchester's population and in all types of occupations.

3. Recommend the county partner with NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), state and local departments of labor, heavy construction, Laborers Local 60, and other labor unions to establish internships and educational pipelines to careers in climate change and energy, heavy construction, and other related industries.

Housing

Finding 2

There are four impediments for people of African ancestry having access to quality housing in Westchester. They include, out-of-reach housing costs, limited geographic housing options, exclusionary zoning laws, resistance among municipalities to build affordable housing and enforce fair housing laws in their communities. Forty-nine percent of rental households and 40% of homeownership households are classified by HUD as having housing costs that are unaffordable or severely unaffordable. In addition, people of African ancestry live under extreme segregated housing conditions. Although this group represents 17% of Westchester's population, 77% live in five of the six central cities. Among 71% of Westchester's towns and villages, people of African ancestry comprise less than 5% of the residents in these municipalities.

Recommendations

1. Advocate for continued investment in housing programs that reduce the cost burden of rental and homeownership properties for eligible residents.
2. Advocate for expanding affordable housing in communities with low representation of people of African ancestry.
3. Partner with the Anti-Discrimination Center, Westchester Opportunity Organization, the Westchester County Housing Opportunity Commission (WCHOC), and the Fair Housing Justice Center to eliminate exclusionary laws in local municipalities.

Education

Finding 3

Because public schools are funded largely by property taxes, a two-tier system exists for the delivery of services to children—one serving resource-rich school districts catering to families in wealthy, high-income communities, and another system, serving resource-poor school districts catering to families in lower income communities. Overall findings for 2021-2022 reveal major gaps in services and student performance outcomes in these two types of districts. These disparities are having a negative impact on children in poor school districts. Fewer resources are available to support these children. For example, on average, there is a \$4,023 gap in per-pupil spending and a 2.5% gap in the teacher-to-student ratio. Students in poorer communities are underperforming on standardized test scores. These districts show gaps ranging from 20% to 46% in student proficiency in core subjects, and a 12% gap in the high school graduation rate.

Recommendations

1. Encourage County government to use its influence to bring together stakeholders with the influence to transform public education. For example, Westchester County should consider seeking partnership with the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents and the National Association of Secondary School principals. Create opportunities for these two groups and other decision-makers to work with local school districts to identify alternative models for public education that produces higher performance outcomes for students, especially students in high/average need school districts.
2. Increase awareness among public and private foundations and other organizations with similar goals for student success of the benefits to investing in longitudinal research. There is a need to better understand how students learn and what they need to realize a more positive and successful K to 12 academic journey.
3. Bring together leaders in education and private-sector businesses to encourage the creation of more pipelines from high school to careers in the U.S. workforce and/or institutions of higher learning.
4. Continue work with the County judicial system to help Black and Brown students complete their education and find career paths in the U.S. workforce or institutions of higher

education. Use this partnership as a template to expand to mission-driven organizations devoted to improving the academic outcomes of Black and Brown students.

Healthcare

Finding 4

Westchester's rating for producing favorable health outcome for its residents is above the national average in the areas of lifespan and quality of life. In spite of Westchester's distinction, lifespan and health outcome scores for people of African ancestry were significantly lower. For example, the lifespan of Westchester's residents was 82.4 years. In contrast, it was 78.8 years for people of African ancestry. Among the 60 health indicators prepared by the NYS Department of Health, 47 indicators showed the health of people of African ancestry was lowest among the general population and among all other racial groups. Children from birth to 17 years are, in particular, subject to the chronic illness of asthma.

Recommendations

1. Continue to reach out to organizations and healthcare institutions to develop forums, workshops, and other mediums designed to improve and increase awareness around chronic conditions suffered by people of African ancestry and other vulnerable groups. Also continue to promote more appropriate culturally sensitive medical intervention for these groups.
2. Continue to implement the directives in the legislation passed by the Westchester County Board of Legislators, authorizing the AAAB to create a subcommittee of its Health and Human Services Committee to better address the chronic illnesses of asthma.
3. Encourage the County Executive to prioritize the importance of transparency among county departments and healthcare providers on progress being made to diversify its workforce. This should include focusing on policies and practices that result in (a) a workforce more representative of Westchester's population, (b) underrepresented groups having equal access to all types of healthcare occupations, especially in the areas of management, and (c) designing methods that measure improvements in health outcomes.

4. Partner with NY Medical College, Westchester Medical Center, New York Presbyterian Hospital, White Plains Hospital Medical Center, and other major medical institutions to create educational pipelines that lead to careers in the healthcare field for people of African ancestry and other underrepresented groups.

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