

RACE TO EQUITY



A Roadmap to Equity: A Two Generation Approach to Reducing Racial Disparities In Dane County

“Supporting More Parents to Succeed in Today’s Economy; Preparing More Young People to Succeed in Tomorrow’s World.”

OVERVIEW

Race to Equity is an initiative aimed at addressing the profound and persistent racial disparities that exist between Dane County whites and non-whites in the areas of employment, income, wealth, education, criminal justice, health, and child welfare.

In October of 2013, Race to Equity released its initial “Baseline Report” which revealed two key realities about white/African American disparities on over 40 well-being measures. First, Dane County was found to be home to some of the widest Black/white disparities of any place in America. Second, African Americans in Dane County not only lag far behind whites, but also generally fare less well and endure more negative life outcomes than Blacks elsewhere in the nation. Since its release, the *Race to Equity Report* has been widely cited as a key catalyst for a remarkable resurgence of commitment, planning and action around achieving greater racial justice in the county. This resurgence has inspired a myriad of emerging initiatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as from new grass roots and leadership coalitions within the county’s various communities.¹ The Race to Equity Project believes this mobilization of widespread and intense public concern is the first leg of a long race towards genuine racial equity, and it is our intention to

¹ “Race to Equity: Racial Equity Community Impact” inventory released on January 28, 2016, available at www.racetoequity.net

continue to provide data driven analysis, track progress, offer comprehensive action ideas and encourage maximum coordination in support of all these local initiatives over the next five years.

OUR PRELIMINARY ROADMAP FOR DRIVING REAL CHANGE IN DANE COUNTY

Outlined below is Race to Equity’s proposed “Roadmap” for equity—a comprehensive, results-based plan that identifies the actions, services, policies, system reforms and investments that we believe our community must undertake if we are to meaningfully address Dane County’s urgent racial inequity crisis. The purpose of this general plan is not to dictate a solution, but to provide an initial scaffolding for building and sustaining a stronger, more complete community consensus around a two-generation action strategy that can simultaneously address: (1) the limited economic opportunities experienced by many parents of color, as well as (2) the insufficient investment and support given to the healthy development, educational achievement, and fair treatment of their children.

The “Roadmap to Equity” is not an independent or original creation of R2E nor is it a final blueprint; it is a preliminary proposal designed to help inspire county-wide commitments to effective action. Our purpose is not to “sell” our Roadmap, but to invite other community voices to revise, add, subtract, enlarge, refine and improve it.

The Roadmap has grown out of an effort to weave together the best of existing local proposals, plans and initiatives, along with relevant national models, into an inclusive, comprehensive and practical action agenda capable of significantly narrowing Dane County’s extreme racial disparities. It is a reflection of more than a year of on-going community consultations and extensive expert advice on the statistics, problems and analysis laid out in the *Race to Equity Baseline Report*. The Roadmap is offered as a framework for the conversations we need to have, including concrete suggestions for specific actions that need to be taken by all sectors of our community. We see it as a dynamic document that will be refined and strengthened by the feed-back and suggestions we receive from interested stakeholders in the months ahead.

More specifically, our outline calls for serious, coordinated, and measurable actions around the following ***three overarching and interrelated goals***, each of which is critical to any real narrowing of racial disparities and increased opportunity for all populations of color by the year 2020:

- 1) We must significantly increase the employment, income and wealth of Dane County’s low-income families of color.**
- 2) We must expand and improve supports for low-income working families of color to better enable them to balance the twin challenges of parenting and success on the job.**

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- 3) We must expand and improve supports for children and youth of color to assure that a far larger percentage of them meet early childhood developmental milestones, enter kindergarten ready to learn, and succeed throughout their school careers.**

ACTIONS AND PROGRESS MEASURES

In the paragraphs that follow we take a closer look at each of the three key Roadmap goals outlined above. We try to identify some of the specific investments and actions we believe are absolutely essential to making real progress on each goal. We also offer our recommendations for specific benchmarks to measure progress in each of the goal areas. We look forward to community reaction and guidance on each of our proposed progress benchmarks. At this stage, they represent a good faith attempt to create ambitious, but realistic, expectations for meaningful change—expectations that all sectors within the county can feel accountable for helping to meet by 2020.

Notably, the progress measures used in the following proposals are based upon the extensive data that we have been able to collect and track for the African American population here in Dane County. Accordingly, we are relying on tracking improvements in the African American community's well-being statistics as the primary progress measure for this preliminary version of our Roadmap. We strongly believe, however, that the actions recommended in this Roadmap, if faithfully implemented, will benefit all the communities of color who confront severe inequities in Dane County. As we continue to collect wider data, expand partnerships and circulate this Roadmap to diverse stakeholders, we will incorporate more tailored actions and progress measures for other communities of color.

Increase the Employment, Income and Wealth of Dane County's Low-Income Families of Color by 2020

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1) Public, private and non-profit employers should, individually or as groups, publicly commit to recruiting and hiring substantial numbers of additional workers from low-income households of color, and to increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of their overall workforces.
- 2) Public sector, non-profit and private sector employers should critically review their policies and practices relating to recruitment, definition of job qualifications, credential

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and educational requirements, interview and reference procedures, and treatment of prior justice system involvement in order to reduce exclusionary consequences of many current HR practices for a disproportionate number of low-income job seekers of color.

- 3) Formal employment training and placement providers (public, private and non-profit) should commit to identifying, engaging, training, and placing significantly more low-income parents of color into jobs and do so in partnership with major employers.
- 4) City and County agencies along with employers, training organizations and youth serving providers should significantly increase the opportunities for youth of color to participate in work preparation activities, work experience, career counseling, and summer jobs.
- 5) Community organizations, churches, neighborhood associations, family service providers, neighborhood centers and advocacy organizations should actively help identify, encourage, support, refer and mentor an increased number of unemployed parents of color who are in need of job training or who are entering the workforce.
- 6) Dane County government should explore the overall economic benefits of increasing the minimum wage to a family supporting level as soon as practical; and county, city, employers and non-profit service agencies should assure that all low-income working parents of color benefit from the earned income and child care tax credits for which they are eligible.
- 7) Public and non-profit family serving, housing, employment and economic development agencies, adult education programs, as well as local financial institutions and financial education providers, should significantly increase the fraction of low-income families of color who are “banked,” have access to budgeting and financial coaching, achieve home ownership, and are supported in their entrepreneurial pursuits.
- 8) City, county and the private sector planning agencies should take into account the county’s changing demographics in the crafting of future economic development plans for the region.

PROGRESS MEASURES

If the above action objectives are adopted and fulfilled by key actors, we (i.e. all sectors of the community) should aspire to and be held accountable for reaching the following targets by 2020: *

- **Reduction in Dane County's African American unemployment rate from the 2010-2012 estimate of 21.4% to 12% or lower by 2020.**
- **Reduction in Dane County's African American poverty rate from 40.8% to no more than 28% by 2020.**
- **Reduction in the Dane County's African American child poverty rate from 57.3% to no more than 39% by 2020.**
- **Increase in the median household income of Dane County's African Americans from \$27,495 to at least \$37, 500 by 2020.**
- **Increase Black home ownership from 2015 levels of 17% to at least 24% by 2020.**
- **Increase Black owned businesses from 2015 levels by at least 33% by 2020.**

Support Working Families of Color As They Balance the Demands of Both Parenting and Employment

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1) County and non-profit providers should substantially increase affordable, quality child care and early learning programs for currently underserved low-income working or job seeking families of color with children under five.
- 2) City and County agencies along with non-profit providers and public school districts should provide increased availability of quality afterschool care and summer/vacation

* Baseline rate numbers are from the 2010-2012 American Community Survey.

child care and youth programming for school age children of currently underserved working or job-seeking families of color.

- 3) City, County, non-profit providers and some large employers should enhance or reconfigure public and non-profit transportation services in order to better meet the job commuting needs of workers/job-seekers residing in each of the county's high unemployment neighborhoods of color.
- 4) City, County, and non-profit family service agencies should significantly increase the availability of parent education, family counseling, crisis intervention, and family preservation services sufficient to meet the predictable additional stresses imposed upon newly employed, low-income families with children.
- 5) Public, private and non-profit sectors should invest in significantly enhancing the availability of core family strengthening resources and amenities in the county's low-income neighborhoods, including access to groceries, pharmacies, banks and safe places for positive supervised youth activities.
- 6) City, County, and non-profit youth serving agencies, along with the courts and public school districts, should significantly increase the availability of quality intervention, support and diversion programs for out- of- school, disconnected or delinquent youth.
- 7) City, County and state housing agencies, along with affordable housing developers should significantly increase the quantity and availability of affordable, safe and adequate housing to enable low- income working or job-seeking families of color (including those that may have had a criminal record) to benefit from greater residential stability for themselves and their children.

PROGRESS MEASURES

If the above action objectives are adopted and fulfilled by key actors, we should aspire to and be held accountable for reaching the following targets by 2020:

- **Newly employed parents receiving family support assistance will achieve higher rates of job retention and promotion than those who did not receive the supports.**
- **We should decrease the average daily population of African American children in foster care from the 2011 level of 124 to 50 by 2020.**

- **We should decrease the rate of referrals to child protective services of African American children from 2011 rate of 196 per 1000 to 90 per 1000 by 2020.**
- **We should decrease the arrest rate for African American adults in Dane County from the 2012 rate of 295 per 1000 to 95 per 1000 by 2020.**
- **We should decrease frequency of in-county residential moves by low-income parents of color by 25% by 2020.**
- **Surveys of Dane County’s low-income communities will reflect significant improvements in residents’ perception of the safety, leadership opportunities, and accessibility of services, retail outlets, recreational and cultural opportunities in their neighborhoods between 2015-2020.**

Assure that More Children of Color are Born Healthy, Meet Developmental Milestones, are Ready for Kindergarten and Succeed Throughout their School Careers by 2020

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1) Public and private health care, child care, mental health and family service providers, along with schools and community organizations, should assure that all low-income parents with whom they work have the knowledge, tools and access to quality services needed to help their children meet pre-school developmental milestones.
- 2) City, County, and non-profit agencies, along with school systems, should continue to expand affordable and high quality child care and early learning programs, capable of helping all children of low-income working parents meet key developmental and school readiness benchmarks.
- 3) County school systems and community organizations should expand and improve efforts and opportunities to remove barriers to increase communication with and participation of parents of color in the schooling of their children.
- 4) County school systems and community organizations should intensify their commitment and actions to diversify their teaching and support workforces to much more closely reflect the diversity of our student populations.

- 5) County school districts' should further deepen the priority they place on early grade interventions and strategies that can increase the percentage of students of color who demonstrate grade level reading proficiency in 3rd grade.
- 6) County school systems and community organizations should extend attendance monitoring, mentoring, tutoring and counseling support to those students at greatest risk of not meeting academic success benchmarks.
- 7) County school systems should adopt or expand effective behavioral and classroom/school management practices that significantly reduce reliance on out-of-school suspensions as a conduct management response.
- 8) County school systems, community organization and service providers should continue and expand efforts to apply best practices aimed at recognizing and addressing chronic absence of at risk students.
- 9) City, County and non-profit youth serving agencies, along with county school systems, should expand summer learning and enrichment programming to reduce the extent of summer learning loss among the children of low-income working families.
- 10) County school systems should increase their investment in teacher training and support aimed at enhancing the teaching corps' overall effectiveness in helping low-income students of color meet high standard learning goals.
- 11) County school systems, in cooperation with public and non-profit youth serving agencies, should expand effective and targeted drop-out prevention interventions and programs to reduce failure to graduate rates among those students at greatest risk.
- 12) County school systems, and their youth serving partners, should take steps to increase the number of students of color who are prepared for, take, and do well on the ACT exam.

PROGRESS MEASURES

If the above action objectives are adopted and fulfilled by key actors, we should aspire to and be held accountable for reaching the following targets by 2020:

- **Significantly narrow the current gap in rates of school readiness between white and African American 5-yr. olds by 2020.**
- **Increase the percent of Black 3rd graders achieving reading proficiency or higher from the 2013-2014 rate of 13.8% to 35% by 2020.**

- **Increase rate of Black 8th graders who achieve proficiency or higher in math to from the 2013-2014 rate of 17.6% to 38% by 2020.**
- **Reduce the percentage of Black students who are suspended from school from the 2012-2013 rate of 18.3% to no more than 8% by 2020.**
- **Increase the percentage of African American students who graduate on time from the 2013-2014 rate of 61% to 78% by 2020.**
- **Decrease juvenile arrests of African American youth from 1919 arrests in 2012 to no more than 800 arrests in 2020.**

CONCLUSION

THE ROLE OF A ROADMAP

The Roadmap sketched out above is not a final blueprint; it is a preliminary proposal designed to help build and sustain a county-wide commitment to meaningful action over the next five years. Although doubtlessly incomplete, we think our suggested Roadmap has some of the key features that must be built into any effective effort to reduce racial disparities.

First, we think it presents an aspirational yet achievable vision of progress toward greater racial equity on a realistic timetable. Dane County is a high employment community with a history of steady job growth. It is a place with strong education and training institutions and agencies. We have solid family and social services and excellent models of early child care. We have good public schools and committed teachers. In short, we believe that we have more than enough capacity to provide decent paying jobs, family supports and intensified attention to the school success of at risk children to dramatically improve the future for the County's children and families of color over the next five years.

Second, it is an integrated, two-generation approach, with the elements that research suggests need to be present to maximize impact on the well-being of low-income families: getting and keeping jobs, practical help with meeting the challenges of balancing work and family; increased investment and emphasis on pre-school development and in-school achievement of vulnerable children from low-income families.

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Third, it is also a plan that takes the first steps in identifying many of the important and specific actions, policy reforms, and investments that will be required to narrow the indefensible economic, academic, justice system, health and well-being disparities that currently exist between white and non-white populations in Dane County.

Finally, it includes measurable, realistic progress goals for positive change over the next five years. Our proposed goals won't end racial disparities in Dane County by 2020, but if we met them, we would meaningfully narrow the unacceptable divide we face today. The details of these suggested progress measures should elicit further discussion and refinement, but committing to measurable impact measures, whatever they end up being, is critical for holding ourselves and our leaders accountable for making continuous progress on this urgent challenge in our county.

NEXT STEPS

The Race to Equity Project plans to continue taking our draft 'Roadmap' directly to the community – just as we did with the *Race to Equity Baseline Report*. We hope to talk further with residents, policy-makers, experts, advocates, funders, employers, teachers and social workers.

Our purpose is not to “sell” our Roadmap, but rather to have others continue to revise, add, subtract, enlarge and refine the document until we have shaped it into a widely supported action plan. Then we hope to encourage every sector and community within Dane County to find and do their part in transforming our city, county and state into a more inclusive, fairer and better place for all who live here.

Acknowledging the need for collaboration, collective work and ongoing partnerships and relationships with the community, the Race to Equity project believes that it has a useful role to play in the implementation of a shared plan for change -- a role that we strongly believe builds upon our greatest strengths and assets as an organization and a team -- knowing that our role is only a piece in a much larger puzzle.

In brief, the Race to Equity project will 1) continue to collect, disseminate and provide analysis for updated data as it relates to the well-being of African Americans and other populations of color in Dane County; 2) continue to engage the broader community around the Roadmap; 3) use our engagement to encourage key stakeholders to commit to the coordinated and aligned actions that will advance our shared agenda; 4) track changes on the progress measures included in the Roadmap; 5) deepen our advocacy partnerships with other communities of color; 6) provide on-going advice, technical assistance and consultation around the three overarching Roadmap goals - highlighting evidenced-based

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best practices for each of them; and 7) help to identify roles for every sector of our community to engage and participate in helping reach shared goals.

Finally, the Race to Equity Project hopes to play a broader, more facilitative role as a neutral, objective and credible convener and connector for all Dane County stakeholders (public, private and non-profit) who want to come together and stay together in a sustainable, aligned movement to reduce racial disparities and increase opportunity and justice for all of Dane County's communities of color.

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