ADVANCING WORKFORCE EQUITY
IN METRO DETROIT
A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION

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FOREWORD

While top-line measures indicate that the US economy has largely bounced back from the Covid-19 pandemic, millions of workers and families across the nation are still reeling. Nearly a quarter of the US workforce experienced at least some period of unemployment due to the pandemic. Millions of parents—especially women—left the workforce to care for their children. Nearly six million households are still behind on rent. And all of these impacts have been disproportionately felt by low-wage workers and workers of color.

Across the nation, policymakers and local leaders are plotting the course for economic recovery. But the Covid-19 crisis laid bare the deep-seated roots of racial inequities in our economy—an economy built on far too many low-wage, low-quality jobs and deeply entrenched occupational segregation by race and gender. To advance an equitable recovery and lay the foundation for a thriving and inclusive future economy that benefits all workers and communities, we must prioritize strategies that dismantle structural racism and promote shared prosperity.

Workforce equity means a labor market in which racial income gaps are eliminated, all jobs are good jobs, and everyone who wants to work has access to family-supporting employment. Employers, policymakers, community organizations, funders, education and training providers, and intermediaries all have important roles to play in bringing this vision to life: uplifting workers' voices; cultivating diverse, thriving regional economies that support high-quality jobs; and proactively fostering a just transition and an equitable future of work in the face of accelerating automation and technological change.

As businesses and jobs continue to rebound, racial equity must be at the center of coordinated efforts and collaborations across the workforce ecosystem. To support this important work, the reports in the Advancing Workforce Equity series put the power of disaggregated data into the hands of local leaders working to foster a more just and sustainable economy through their policy efforts, programs, and investments.

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2.0
SUMMARY

Over the past two years, a global pandemic wreaked havoc on public health, families, workers, and businesses; the United States faced a moment of profound racial reckoning following the murder of George Floyd; and federal policy proposals amid an uneven recovery put racial equity squarely at the center of public debate. This watershed period has exposed—and, in some instances deepened—racial inequities built into the structure of the US economy and across various social systems. Nearly 41 million workers experienced at least one period of unemployment due to Covid-19.[1] Dramatic and perhaps lasting changes in the ways work gets done, at least by knowledge workers, have transformed corporate practices and workplace cultures. Many older workers have permanently left the labor force. And scores of low-wage workers across different industries have mobilized to seek out better economic conditions, whether through unionization campaigns, other forms of worker organizing and advocacy, or by quitting bad jobs to find better ones. Meanwhile, many businesses are leaning into automation and digitalization as they navigate the uncertainties of the impending post-Covid era. And in the midst of all these transformations, momentous demographic shifts are multiplying the costs of racial inequities in the Detroit region with each passing year.

This report is one of nine regional analyses in the Advancing Workforce Equity project, building on the insights of our previous research to inform a tailored, ground-level blueprint for advancing workforce equity.[2] It provides a data-driven evaluation of racial inequities in workforce outcomes in the Detroit region, examining how systemic racism manifests in the labor market, the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and how automation may affect industries and workers in the area. (Unless otherwise noted, "Detroit," "Metro Detroit," "Detroit metro," and "Detroit region" are used throughout this report to refer to the Detroit-Warren-Livonia, Michigan, metropolitan statistical area as defined by the US Office of

Management and Budget's December 2003 Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) definitions. This region includes Wayne, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, and St. Clair counties.) Our findings are based on analysis of labor force data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, disaggregated data on wages and employment from the 2018 and 2019 five-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA, data on current and historical job demand and automation risk from Lightcast, and other sources of local data, as well as interviews with local stakeholders and the insights of the regional advisory group.

Our key findings include the following:

- **As the workforce grows more diverse, racial inequity carries mounting economic costs.**

  — ***People of color make up a large and growing share of the Detroit area's workforce, but they are not benefiting equitably from its economic prosperity.*** Workers of color make up 33 percent of the workforce between the ages of 25 and 64 years in the Detroit region, and more than 40 percent of the "emerging workforce"—the population under the age of 25. But Black, Native American, and Latinx workers are paid significantly lower median wages than their white counterparts, and workers of color are more than twice as likely as white workers to experience working poverty (defined as working full time and having a family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level).

  — ***Racial economic exclusion hampers the region's economic growth.*** In 2018 alone, racial gaps in wages and employment for working-age people cost the region almost $28 billion in unrealized gross domestic product (GDP). With racial equity in income, average annual incomes would increase by 79 percent for Black adults and 47 percent for Latinx adults, to about $53,000.

- **The structure of the regional economy and evolving labor market demand reinforce racial gaps in employment and wages.**

  — *The workforce remains deeply segregated by occupation.* Despite the growing diversity of the Detroit Metro workforce, workers of color tend to be crowded in lower paying and lower opportunity occupational groups, while white workers are overrepresented in many higher paying professions.

  — *The region has a shortfall of good jobs that do not require a college degree.* Overall, only 29 percent of workers are in good jobs (defined as stable, automation-resilient jobs with family-sustaining wages). The share drops to only 5 percent among workers in jobs that require a high school diploma or less, compared to about two-thirds of jobs that require a bachelor's degree or higher. This good-jobs gap has significant racial equity implications, considering that more than 40 percent of US-born Black, Native American, and US-born Latinx adults and 68 percent of Latinx immigrant adults have no college education.

- **Equity in higher educational attainment is essential, but insufficient, to achieve racial economic inclusion.** Higher education significantly narrows racial gaps in labor force participation, employment, and earnings, but does not close racial income gaps. The median hourly wage for white workers in the Detroit region with only a high school diploma is 12 percent higher ($19/hour) than that for Black workers with an associate's degree ($17/hour). Among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, the median hourly wage for white workers is about 30 percent higher than their Black counterparts.

- **The Covid-19 pandemic compounded pre-existing racial inequities and economic inequality, and it is likely to further disrupt the labor market by accelerating automation and digitalization.**

  — *Unemployment disproportionately impacted Black workers.* Throughout 2020, the average unemployment rate for Black workers in the Detroit region was roughly twice that of their white counterparts. Unemployment for Black workers peaked in April/May 2020 at around 40 percent, while unemployment for white workers peaked at 22 percent.

— ***Black and Latinx workers face disproportionate risk of automation-driven job displacement.*** In the Detroit region, Latinx workers are 13 percentage points more likely and Black workers are 11 percentage points more likely (at 63 percent and 61 percent of workers, respectively) than white workers (50 percent) to be in occupations at risk of automation (based on the likelihood that the underlying tasks of the job will be computerized).

Policymakers, employers, educators, training providers, funders, and community-based organizations all have important roles to play to advance workforce equity in the Detroit region and to ensure that all workers, including those who face the additional burdens of systemic racism, are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow with the skills, supports, and access they need to fully participate and thrive in the economy. Our recommendations for designing and activating such a racial equity agenda, developed in partnership with the regional advisory committee that informed this report, include the following action items.

1. Establish a unified collaborative to align workforce initiatives and help workers and job seekers navigate support and training services.
2. Strengthen education, training, and employment opportunities and wraparound support for young people and adult learners.
3. Promote policy solutions and support worker power and advocacy to raise the floor on low-wage work.
4. Build robust data collection and measurement tools to track worker outcomes, identify opportunities for employers, and inform system improvements.
5. Support employers to transform workplace cultures and adopt equitable practices in hiring, retaining, and promoting career development for workers of color.

3.0
INTRODUCTION

In the years following the Great Recession, the Detroit region seemed poised for a strong economic rebound. From 2010 to 2012, the region gained about 92,000 jobs, the fourth-fastest rate of growth among large US metros during that period.[3] On the foundation of core sectors, such as manufacturing, trade, transportation, and finance, the regional economy made an impressive comeback. Over the decade between 2009 and 2019, private-sector employment in Metro Detroit grew by 21 percent, outpacing both the state of Michigan and the nation as a whole (both 19 percent). By 2019, Detroit ranked squarely in the middle of the 50 largest US metropolitan regions in terms of the number of jobs per working-age resident; at 64 jobs per 100 working-age adults, the region's labor market was on par with metros such as Buffalo, Columbus, Dallas, and Richmond.[4] In 2019, the Detroit regional GDP climbed to more than $266 billion.[5] Just before the pandemic, in February 2020, the unemployment rate was 4.4 percent.[6]

Yet the region's recovery was racially uneven, and persistent racial inequities in housing, income, and other key measures of well-being have constrained the region's economic growth. Racial wage gaps expanded in the post-recession period, and the median wage for workers of color is now $19 per hour, compared to $25 per hour for white workers.[7] People of color in the Detroit region are twice as likely as their white counterparts to be economically insecure.[8] And, Detroit ranks 32nd in terms of highest level of income inequality among the 150 largest metro regions in the US.[9]

When Covid-19 hit, Detroit was hit especially hard. Employment dramatically plummeted and many businesses permanently shuttered. Deep and longstanding economic inequities fueled the pandemic's disproportionate health and economic impacts on people of color—particularly Black residents, for whom unemployment spiked to more than 40 percent, according to our analysis.

Eighteen months into the pandemic, overall employment remained down nearly 8 percent compared to the January 2020 baseline. Fortunately, the region's economy is now showing some signs of recovery. Consumer spending has recovered to the pre-Covid baseline, and as of April 2022, total job postings in the region were up by 11 percent compared to January 2020.[10] But this increased demand is concentrated in jobs that require only minimal or some education—a lopsided labor market rebound driven by low-wage and low-opportunity occupations.[11] In this context, people of color continue to face barriers to accessing good jobs *today* and are also more vulnerable than their white counterparts to being displaced by accelerating automation and digitalization in the economy of *tomorrow*.

Such inequities are a drag on the region's productivity and its future economic prospects: our analysis shows that in 2018 alone, racial gaps in income and employment for the population ages 25–64 cost Metro Detroit an estimated $28 billion in unrealized GDP. To build shared prosperity for all residents, racial equity must be at the center of both short-term recovery efforts and long-term systems and policy changes. This report provides deeply disaggregated data on workers, workforce outcomes, and labor market dynamics in the Detroit region, and offers a framework for action to support the efforts of local leaders in business, philanthropy, and community organizations who are advancing workforce equity from the ground up. As local leaders across the region continue to chart the course for the next economic recovery, it is essential to center racial equity in the policies, programs, and investments driving those efforts. Closing racial gaps in economic outcomes and fostering greater upward mobility for low-income residents are essential ingredients for building a resilient and sustainable Detroit regional economy in which all can participate and thrive.

4.0
STRUCTURAL RACISM
DRIVES WORKFORCE INEQUITIES

Inequitable workforce outcomes arise out of the deep history of racial exclusion in the region, including redlining, racial segregation, and disinvestment in communities of color; inequitable investments in education; discrimination, bias, and systemic racism in employment practices; and racial inequities in the criminal-legal system. The key dynamics perpetuating workforce inequity in the Detroit region include the following.

Residential Segregation and Educational Inequities

Many of the region's racial inequities can be understood in spatial terms, through the lens of entrenched residential segregation. While the population of the city of Detroit was 78 percent Black in 2019, Metro Detroit was 66 percent white.[12] This geographic split—the city-suburban divide between Black and white residents—is rooted in the World War II era population boom that saw many (Black and white) residents drawn to the city's vibrant manufacturing industry, longstanding discrimination and redlining, and ultimately a long era of subsidized "white flight" to the suburbs that dramatically shifted patterns of both public and private investment.[13]

These patterns of regional segregation impact workforce outcomes in many ways. Residents of wealthy neighborhoods rich in opportunity benefit not only from quality schools but also from access to the social capital of well-connected personal and professional networks, which can also play an important role in employment opportunities. Without access to these resources, and in the face of discriminatory employer practices, both conscious and unconscious bias in hiring, and inadequate policy protections, people of color are more likely than whites to be unemployed or crowded into low-quality jobs.

Housing cost burden is a major financial stressor for many Detroit residents. About 56 percent of Black renter households face unaffordable rents, along with 45 percent of white renters and 42 percent of Latinx renters.[14] High housing costs contribute to an uneven geography of opportunity that has cascading impacts on the ability of low- and middle-wage workers and people of color to access employment and educational opportunities.

Entrenched racial and economic segregation means that Black and Latinx children are overwhelmingly more likely than their peers to attend high-poverty schools that are systematically underfunded and neglected. Statewide high school graduation rates have improved modestly in recent years; however, in Detroit Public Schools Community District—which covers the city of Detroit, where most of the region's Black residents live—graduation rates have fallen for four consecutive years, and too few students are finishing school prepared for college or a career.[15] In the Detroit region, just 18 percent of Black adults, 19 percent of Native American adults, and 21 percent of Latinx adults have at least a four-year degree, compared with 36 percent of white adults. And even at higher levels of educational attainment, racial inequities in worker outcomes are persistent. Higher education is associated with higher wages and lower joblessness for workers across all racial/ethnic groups, but it does not eliminate racial gaps.

Racial Wealth Gap

The racial wealth divide in the Detroit region is both a cause and consequence of racial exclusion. In the state of Michigan, the median net worth of white households is around $91,000, compared to $4,000 for households of color—a gap deepened by the 2008 financial crisis.[16] Prior to the recession, most households of color in the region were homeowners, but now 53 percent are renters (compared to just 22 percent of white households). Between 2007 and 2009, 8 percent of Black homeowners (240,000 households) lost their homes, compared with 4.5 percent of their white peers.[17]

Racial inequities in wealth mean that many people of color lack the capital to make personal investments in education and training opportunities, and are also at a disadvantage in raising startup capital or accessing traditional financing to grow a business.[18] In the city of Detroit, Black people account for 78 percent of the population but own just 10 percent of businesses, and the vast majority of those are microbusinesses or sole proprietorships with no paid employees other than the owner.[19]

The racial wealth gap also impacted the ability of small businesses owned by people of color to access the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to weather the Covid-19 crisis. Because PPP funds were delivered through banks and other approved lenders, small businesses owned by people of color and those operating in lower income areas were less likely to benefit from this important relief program.[20]

Structural Changes in the Economy

Although the Detroit regional economy saw a period of recovery after the Great Recession, the long-term decline of the manufacturing sector continued. From 1999 to 2019, manufacturing employment in Metro Detroit fell by 114,000 jobs (more than 30 percent), continuing an ongoing trend accelerated by deindustrialization, automation, globalization, and other large-scale economic trends.[21] This sharp decline of manufacturing jobs—which, with their historically high union density, had long provided a pathway to economic security for workers without a college degree—exacerbated racial economic inequities in the Detroit region amid broader trends of union membership decline.

Concentrated growth in low-wage jobs has left many workers and families economically insecure and without access to benefits or opportunities for career advancement. According to an analysis from Detroit Future City, low-wage jobs in the region accessible without a postsecondary education grew by 32 percent between 2010 and 2019, compared to just 12 percent growth among jobs that require a bachelor's degree or higher. During the same period, wages stagnated for workers with and without four-year degrees.[22]

Systemic and Institutional Racism in the Labor Market

National research indicates that racial bias and discrimination in recruitment and hiring remain significant barriers for people of color: with identical resumes, white applicants (or applicants with "white-sounding" names) are called back 36 percent more often than Black applicants and 24 percent more often than Latinx applicants.[23] And seemingly race-neutral employer hiring practices like credit checks and criminal background checks present further disproportionate barriers for people of color.

In Wayne County, Black residents are about 3.5 times more likely to be arrested than white residents.[24] This disproportionate policing and prosecution can unnecessarily disqualify Black residents from many jobs that require an occupational license. Credit checks conducted as part of a job-application process also unduly burden Black and Latinx candidates, who are less likely than other groups to have access to safe and affordable banking that supports wealth and credit building.[25] Racial discrimination in the financial services system, banking deserts (low-income neighborhoods with limited access to banks and credit unions), and the costs associated with maintaining traditional bank accounts—which are higher in majority-Latinx and majority-Black neighborhoods than in white neighborhoods— mean that people of color are more likely to be unbanked.[26]

Uneven Geography of Opportunity

Workforce stability depends on more than expanding education and training and ensuring equitable hiring practices. Workers need to be able to access job opportunities that are either close to where they live or accessible via affordable and brief commutes, underscoring the important overlap of workforce development, affordable housing, and transportation equity to address the spatial mismatch between jobs and housing. High-wage jobs in Detroit are often held by workers who commute into the city from the suburbs, while many low-wage workers travel from their homes in the city to work in outlying areas.[27]

People of color in the Detroit region are more likely than their white peers to be housing-cost burdened, and much less likely to have access to a private vehicle, resulting in longer unpaid commute times.[28] About 20 percent of Black households, 11 percent of Native American households, and 9 percent of Latinx households do not own a car.[29] This is due in part to prohibitive costs—car insurance in Detroit costs about four times the national average, which puts vehicle ownership out of reach for many workers and families.[30] Across the region, Black workers who use public transportation to get to work spend an average of 59 minutes traveling each way—a commute that is more than twice the regional average and amounts to two hours a day of unpaid time spent getting to and from work.[31] These spatial inequities may be fueling ongoing population decline in the city of Detroit. Data from the 2020 census suggest that the population of the city fell by more than 11 percent since 2010, including a 16 percent decline in the Black population, while the population of the larger metro area remained relatively stable (with modest growth of about 2 percent).[32]

5.0

CONTINUING DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES UNDERSCORE THE NEED FOR RACIAL EQUITY

Metro Detroit has seen slow population growth for the last several decades, and has actually experienced a net population decline since 1970.[33] At the same time, demographic changes in the racial/ethnic composition of the population have been steady in the region over the past several decades, with net declines in the white and native-born populations alongside net increases in the people-of-color and immigrant populations.[34] While racial demographic change has been a bit slower in the Detroit region than nationally, change is projected to accelerate, with nearly half (46 percent) of the region's residents projected to be people of color by 2050, up from 34 percent in 2020.[35] These underlying demographic shifts illuminate how lasting economic growth and prosperity in the region are intimately tied to achieving greater racial equity in the workforce.

Workforce Demographics

The Detroit region's workforce is growing more diverse.

Current and Emerging Workforce Demographics by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

● Current workforce
● Emerging workforce
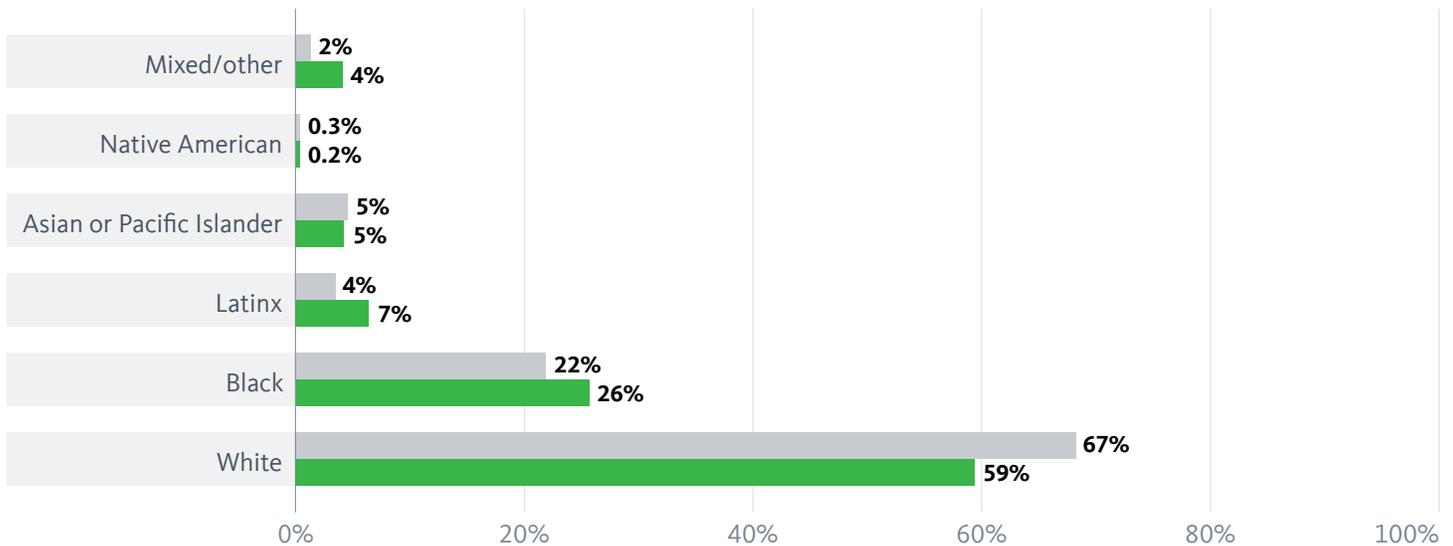
Race/Ethnicity	Current workforce	Emerging workforce
Mixed/other	2%	4%
Native American	0.3%	0.2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	5%	5%
Latinx	4%	7%
Black	22%	26%
White	67%	59%

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe of emerging workforce includes all people under the age of 25 years, while the current workforce includes the employed population ages 25–64 years.

Today, people of color account for one-third of the workforce in the Detroit region (33 percent), with most of that comprising Black workers (22 percent), followed by Asian American or Pacific Islander workers (5 percent), and Latinx workers (4 percent). The demographics of workers in the region will continue to shift as older workers retire and more and more young people of color age into the workforce. Among the emerging workforce (those under the age of 25), people of color comprise 41 percent of the population. Black youth will make up one in four (26 percent) new young workers followed by Latinx youth (7 percent), Asian American or Pacific Islander youth (5 percent), and multiracial youth or those of another race not captured by the predominant groups (4 percent). Meeting the needs of the diverse youth population and ensuring that they have the resources, supports, and opportunities necessary to enter and thrive in the workforce is essential to the region's future prosperity.

Other dimensions of racial/ethnic diversity are also important to understand. Immigrants make up an increasing share of the region's population: as of 2019, 10 percent of residents in the region were immigrants (up from 6 percent in 1990). Over the last decade, population growth among immigrant communities has helped to offset population decline among US-born residents. The Asian or Pacific Islander population is a relatively small share of the region overall but saw the fastest population growth among all groups between 2010 and 2019 (36 percent), largely driven by growth among immigrants. Within this group, the largest populations are people of Indian ancestry (about 66,000 residents), Pacific Islander ancestry (about 34,000), and Chinese ancestry (about 25,000).[36]

The Detroit region is also home to nearly 200,000 people of Middle Eastern or North African ancestry. They account for about 5 percent of the region's population— a larger group than either Latinx or Asian or Pacific Islander residents.[37] Because of standard federal data collection practices, these individuals are most often represented as white in racially disaggregated data, but deeper disaggregation by ancestry reveals disparate outcomes for Middle Eastern or North African people compared to the overall white population in the region. For example, the median wage for workers of Middle Eastern or North African ancestry in Metro Detroit is $21 per hour (the lowest of any white subgroup), compared to $25 per hour for white workers overall, despite having similar degrees of educational attainment.[38] The share of this population who are economically insecure is 53 percent, which is more than twice the share of white people in the region overall (23 percent).[39] They also experience higher rates of housing burden, disconnected youth, and unemployment than the white population overall.

Racial Equity Is a Win-Win for Workers and the Economy

The region's GDP could have been over 10 percent larger if racial gaps in income were eliminated.

Actual GDP and Estimated GDP with Racial Equity in the Workforce ($ billions), Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

⬤ GDP in 2018
🟠 GDP if racial gaps in income were eliminated
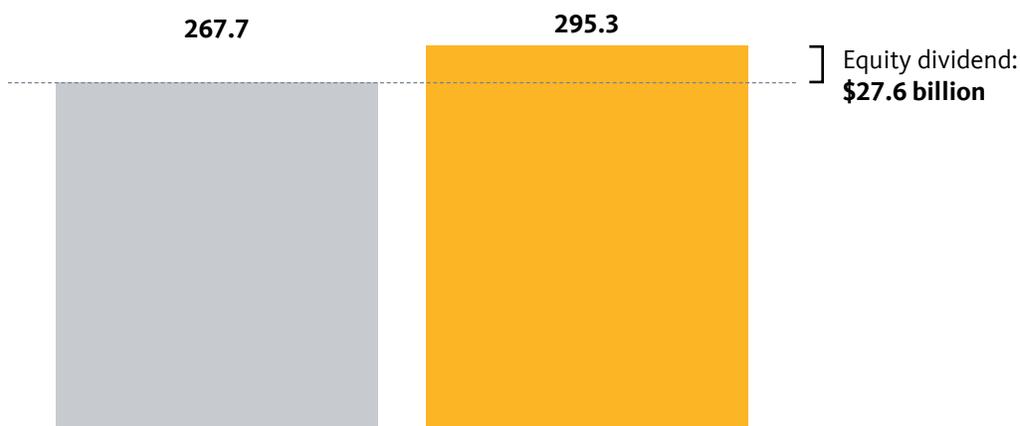
267.7　　　295.3

Equity dividend:
$27.6 billion

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the population ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars. See the Methodology section for details on the analysis.

Workforce equity and shared prosperity are key to building a strong and dynamic economy—as the population becomes more diverse, the benefits of achieving equity will only increase. In 2018 alone, the Detroit region's GDP could have been nearly $28 billion larger—an increase of about 10 percent—if there had been no racial gaps in employment and wages for the working-age population (i.e., if workers in all racial/ethnic groups were employed at least the same rate and earned at least the same average wages as their white peers, adjusted for age).

With racial equity in employment and wages, average incomes for people of color would increase by 55 percent.

Income Gains with Racial Equity in the Workforce, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018
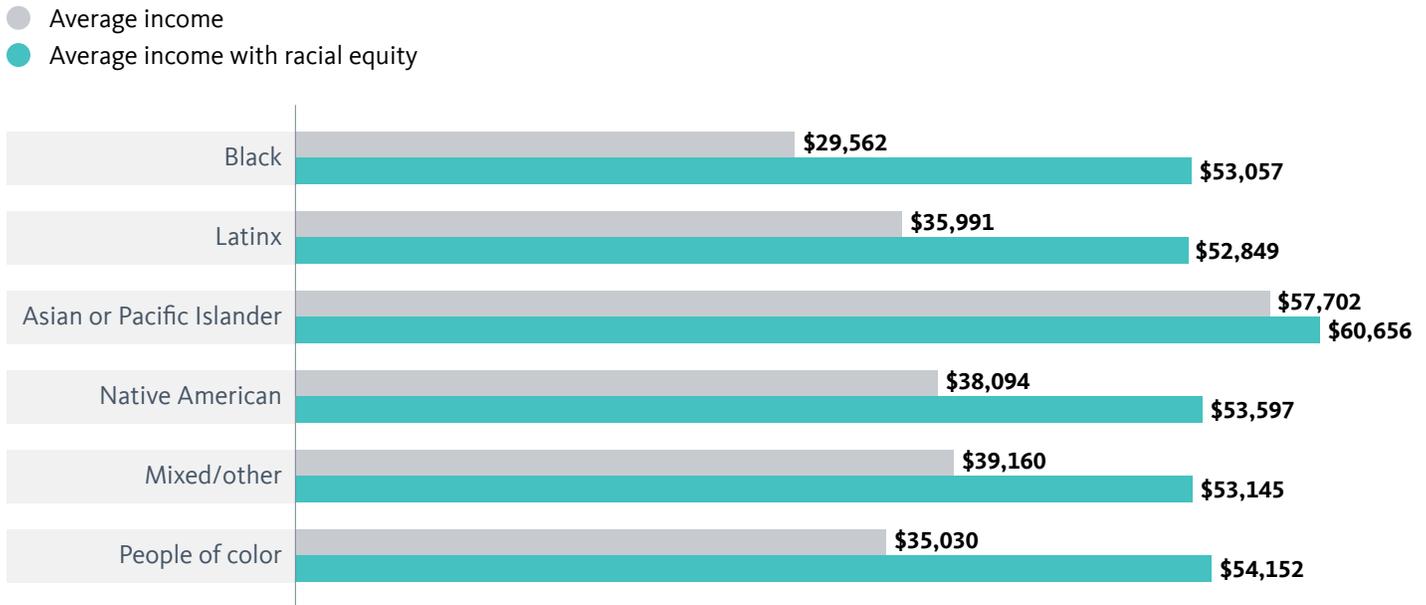
- ● Average income
- ● Average income with racial equity

Group	Average income	Average income with racial equity
Black	$29,562	$53,057
Latinx	$35,991	$52,849
Asian or Pacific Islander	$57,702	$60,656
Native American	$38,094	$53,597
Mixed/other	$39,160	$53,145
People of color	$35,030	$54,152

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the population ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars. See the Methodology section for details on the analysis.

Black workers stand to gain the most with racial equity in the workforce, with average annual incomes rising by about $23,000 (from approximately $30,000 to $53,000). Average income for Latinx workers would rise by about $17,000 (from approximately $36,000 to $53,000), while gains for Native Americans and workers of mixed or other racial backgrounds would not be far behind, rising by $14,000 or more.

Achieving racial equity in income would require closing gaps in both wages and employment. More than half (56 percent) of the average income gains for people of color would come from equalizing wages among workers of similar age. However, the source of the estimated gains varies from one racial/ethnic group to another; racial gaps in wages account for a whopping 81 percent of income inequality experienced by Latinx workers (with the other 19 percent due to differences in employment) but only 57 percent of the income inequality experienced by Black workers (with 43 percent due to differences in employment).

For at least the last three decades, the unemployment rate for Black workers in Metro Detroit has been the highest of any racial/ethnic group in the region, and was consistently two to three times higher than the rate for their white counterparts. From 2015 to 2019, the average unemployment rate for Black adults was 12 percent, compared to 4 percent for white adults.[40]

6.0

DECLINE OF HIGH-WAGE JOBS AND ENTRENCHED INEQUITIES STIFLE LONG-TERM GROWTH

An examination of growth in jobs and wages over the past three decades shows that the Detroit region ranks near the bottom among the 150 largest metro areas in the US, across three broad groups of industries defined by industry wage level in 1990.[41] While middle-wage jobs saw the fastest rate of growth in the region between 1990 and 2018 at 24 percent, the rate was below the national average of 28 percent for middle-wage jobs. More worrisome was the 7 percent decline in high-wage jobs, as these jobs have a greater "multiplier effect," supporting and stimulating job growth in lower and middle-wage industries. Although workforce equity will not attract high-wage jobs on its own, equity is an essential element of sustainable economic prosperity in the long run and for providing workers and families with opportunities to achieve lasting economic security.

Slow Job and Earnings Growth

High-wage jobs have declined over the past 30 years, with earnings growth slow across the board.

Growth in Jobs and Earnings by Wage Level, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 1990–2018

- Low-wage
- Middle-wage
- High-wage
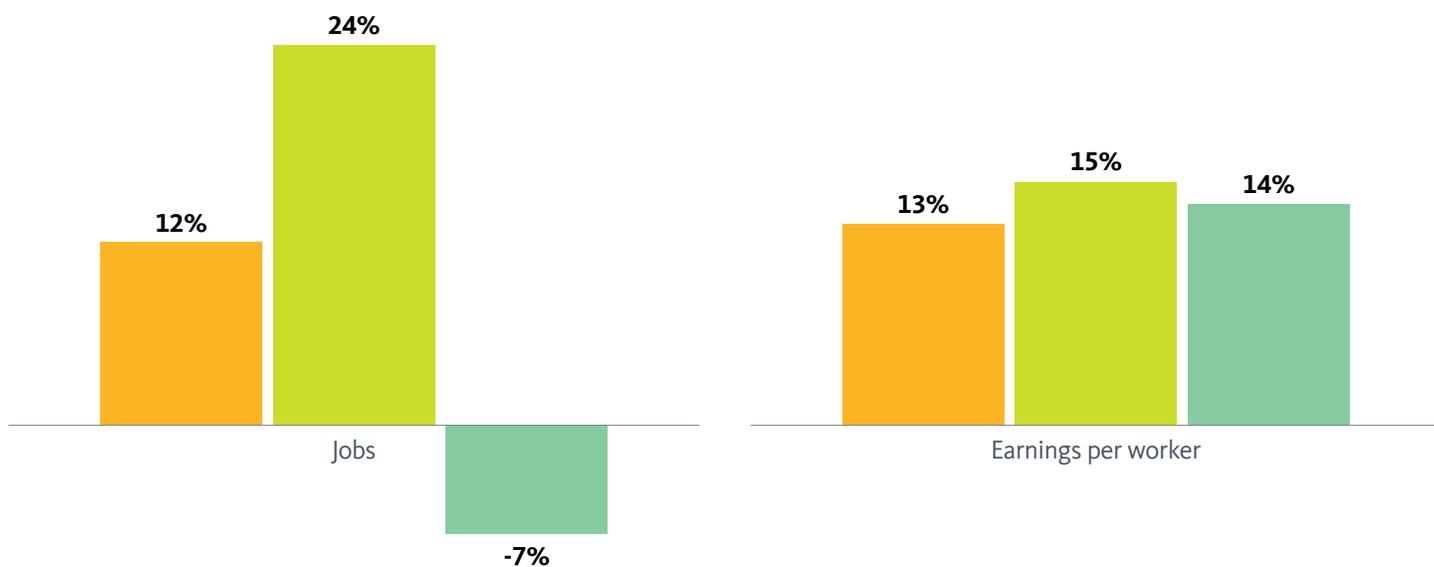
Source: National Equity Atlas, "Job and Wage Growth: Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI," PolicyLink and USC Equity Research Institute, accessed January 14, 2022, https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Job_and_wage_growth#. **Note:** Universe includes all jobs covered by the federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) program.

Occupational segregation is a challenge for achieving workforce equity.

Occupational Groups by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

- ⬤ White
- ⬤ Black
- ⬤ Latinx
- ⬤ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ⬤ Native American
- ⬤ Mixed/other

Total
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports
Financial Specialist
Management
Sales
Education, Training, and Library
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
Construction Trades
Life, Physical, and Social Science
Business Operations Specialists
Architecture and Engineering
Health-Care Practitioners and Technical
Community and Social Services
Office and Administrative Support
Personal Care and Service
Computer and Mathematical
Transportation and Material Moving
Food Preparation and Serving
Protective Service
Production
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
Health-Care Support
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
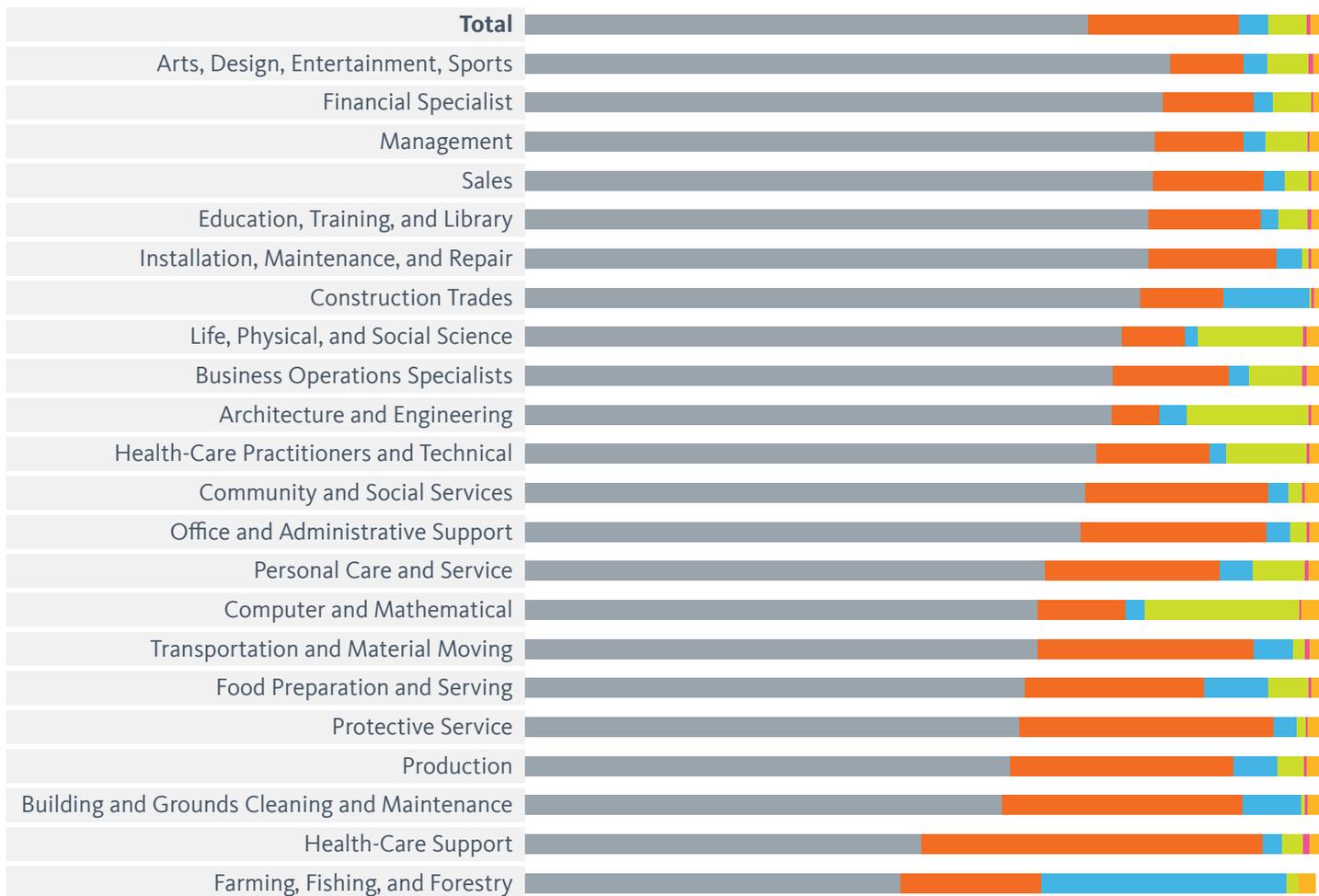
Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the employed population ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average.

Black and Latinx workers are highly overrepresented in a handful of occupations that tend to pay lower wages and provide fewer benefits, while they are highly underrepresented in more rewarding occupations in the region. Black workers comprise about one in five workers across all occupations, but they represent about one in 10 (or less) in many occupations that are generally considered "good jobs," such as architecture and engineering; life, physical, and social sciences; and management. These workers are most concentrated in health-care support occupations where they make up 43 percent of workers. Black workers comprise 32 percent of those in protective service occupations, 30 percent of those in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and 28 percent of workers in production occupations.

Although Latinx workers are a small (but rapidly growing) portion of the workforce at 4 percent, they account for nearly 33 percent of workers in farming, fishing and forestry; 10 percent of workers in construction; and nearly 10 percent of workers in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance and in food preparation and serving occupations. Though not shown in the chart, the same occupations with high shares of Latinx workers also tend to have high concentrations of Latinx immigrant workers. Latinx immigrants comprise nearly half (42 percent) of all Latinx workers, but nearly 90 percent of Latinx workers in farming, fishing, and forestry and about two-thirds of Latinx workers in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance and in construction. Latinx workers are most underrepresented in life, physical, and social sciences; health-care practitioners and technical occupations; and education, training, and library occupations.

The Asian American and Pacific Islander workforce in the region is notable for being almost entirely composed of immigrants: about 90 percent of Asian American and Pacific Islander workers in Metro Detroit are immigrants. Their diversity is reflected in the variety of occupations in which they are overrepresented. Asian American and Pacific Islander workers comprise about 5 percent of the overall workforce but are 19 percent of workers in computer and mathematical occupations and 15 percent of those in architecture and engineering. They are also overrepresented in personal care and service occupations (7 percent) and proportionately represented in food preparation and serving occupations (5 percent).

Wages

Eight out of 10 white and Asian or Pacific Islander workers earn at least $15 an hour, compared to just five in 10 Latinx immigrants.

Share of Workers Earning at Least $15/Hour by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018
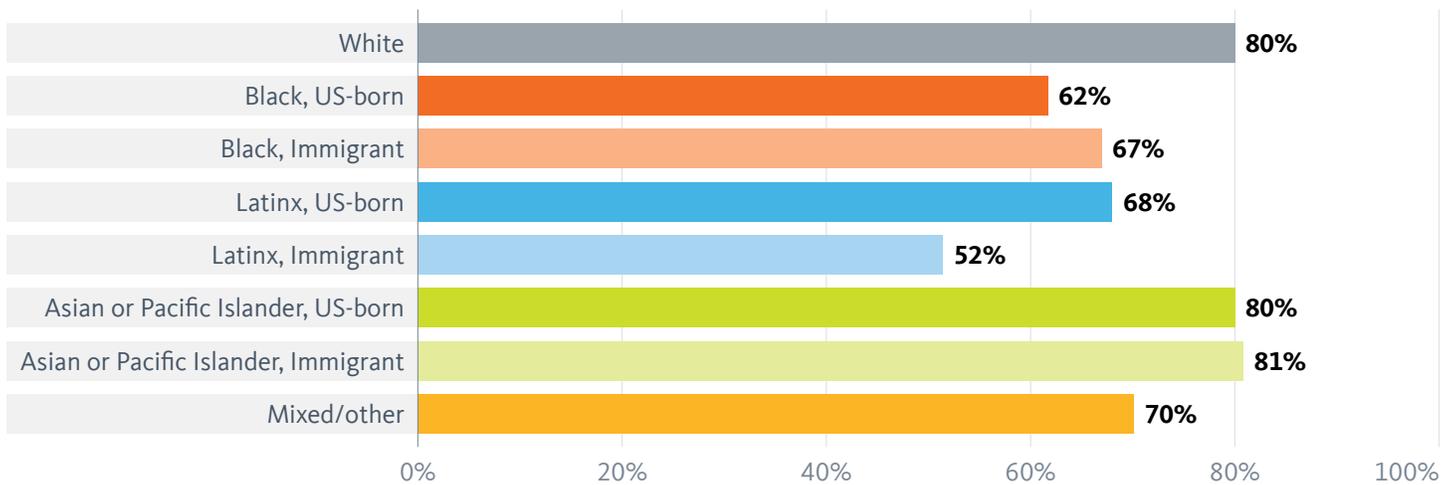
Category	Percentage
White	80%
Black, US-born	62%
Black, Immigrant	67%
Latinx, US-born	68%
Latinx, Immigrant	52%
Asian or Pacific Islander, US-born	80%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Immigrant	81%
Mixed/other	70%

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes civilian noninstitutionalized full-time wage and salary workers ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average. The $15/hour wage threshold is based on 2018 dollars.

The vast majority of white and Asian American or Pacific Islander workers in the Detroit region earn at least $15 per hour, with only about 20 percent of white and Asian American or Pacific Islander workers falling below this very modest wage threshold. In comparison, about 33 percent of Black immigrant and US-born Latinx workers earn less than $15 per hour, along with 38 percent of US-born Black workers and 48 percent of Latinx immigrant workers.

According to the United Way's ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Project, a $15 per hour wage is barely enough to cover a basic survival budget for a single adult in most of Metro Detroit, and less than half the income needed to sustain a family of four.[42]

Most Native American, Black, and Latinx workers are paid far below the regional median wage.

Median Hourly Wage by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2019

Race/Ethnicity	Median Hourly Wage
All	$23
White	$25
Black	$17
Latinx	$19
Asian or Pacific Islander	$34
Native American	$15
Mixed/other	$21
Peolpe of color	$19
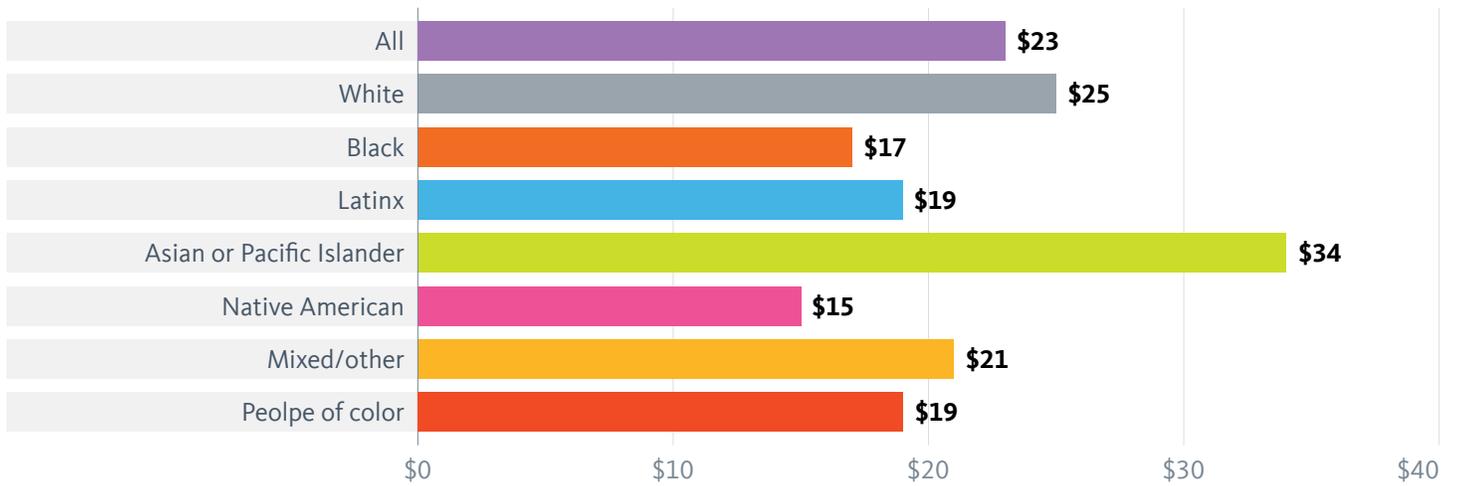
Source: Authors' analysis of the 2019 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes civilian noninstitutionalized full-time wage and salary workers ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2019 average. The $15/hour wage threshold is based on 2019 dollars.

Overall, the median hourly wage of full-time workers in the Detroit region is $23—enough to cover a household survival budget for a family of two or a household stability budget for a single adult according to ALICE thresholds.[43] But, most workers of color are paid far below that level. The median hourly wage of Native American adults in the region is $15—just 65 cents for every dollar earned by a median-wage worker. The median hourly wage for Black adults ($17) is $6 below the median, and for Latinx adults ($19), it is $4 below the median.

Higher Education

Fewer than one in five Latinx immigrants, Native Americans, and US-born Black working-age adults in the Detroit region have a bachelor's degree.

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

- High school diploma or less
- Some college or associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree or higher
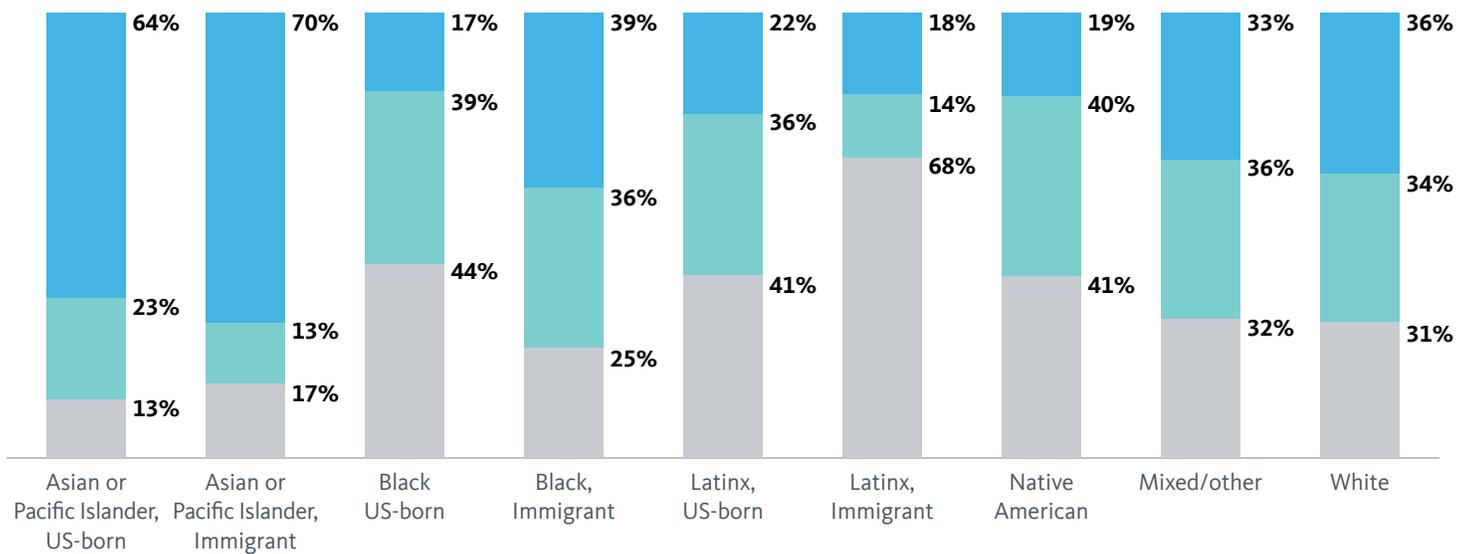
	Asian or Pacific Islander, US-born	Asian or Pacific Islander, Immigrant	Black US-born	Black, Immigrant	Latinx, US-born	Latinx, Immigrant	Native American	Mixed/other	White
Bachelor's degree or higher	64%	70%	17%	39%	22%	18%	19%	33%	36%
Some college or associate's degree	23%	13%	39%	36%	36%	14%	40%	36%	34%
High school diploma or less	13%	17%	44%	25%	41%	68%	41%	32%	31%

The attainment of a bachelor's degree is strongly correlated with lower unemployment, higher wages, and lesser vulnerability to automation-related job disruptions. Among working-age adults, about 36 percent of whites, 39 percent of Black immigrants, 64 percent of US-born Asian or Pacific Islanders, and 70 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander immigrants in Metro Detroit have a bachelor's degree or higher. However, that level of educational attainment is realized by less than 20 percent of US-born Black adults, Latinx immigrants, Native Americans, and US-born Latinx adults.

For Detroit's homegrown talent pool—those raised and educated within the region—both college enrollment and college completion rates trail the national average. According to the Detroit Regional Chamber's 2021 *State of Education* report, the share of high school students in the Detroit region who are college ready has declined in recent years from 40 percent in 2015 to 36 percent in 2019; in the city of Detroit, the share has hovered around just 10 percent. And, fewer of them are enrolling in college: in 2018, about 68 percent of the region's high school graduates and only half of those who graduated in the city of Detroit were enrolled in either a two- or four-year postsecondary program within 12 months of completing high school.[44]

Many students who do enroll in higher education struggle to complete their programs of study in the face of barriers such as foundational skills gaps, financial burdens, and other responsibilities. Just 54 percent of enrolled students in the region have earned a degree or certificate within six years. Meanwhile, racial inequities are stark, with a 20-percentage-point difference in graduation rates between Black and white university students.[45]

Higher educational attainment narrows racial gaps in employment.

Joblessness by Educational Attainment, Race/Ethnicity, and Nativity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

- ⬤ White
- ⬤ Black, US-born
- ⬤ Black, Immigrant
- ⬤ Latinx, US-born
- ⬤ Latinx, Immigrant
- ⬤ Asian or Pacific Islander, US-born
- ⬤ Asian or Pacific Islander, Immigrant
- ⬤ Mixed/other

Less than a HS diploma
White 55%, Black US-born 68%, Latinx US-born 41%, Latinx Immigrant 39%, Asian or Pacific Islander Immigrant 52%

HS diploma, no college
White 34%, Black US-born 44%, Latinx US-born 31%, Latinx Immigrant 26%, Asian or Pacific Islander Immigrant 42%, Mixed/other 40%

Some college, no degree
White 25%, Black US-born 33%, Latinx US-born 26%, Asian or Pacific Islander Immigrant 34%, Mixed/other 37%

AA degree, no BA
White 20%, Black US-born 29%, Latinx US-born 25%, Asian or Pacific Islander Immigrant 36%, Mixed/other 30%

BA degree or higher
White 15%, Black US-born 19%, Latinx US-born 18%, Latinx Immigrant 21%, Asian or Pacific Islander US-born 16%, Asian or Pacific Islander Immigrant 21%, Mixed/other 17%

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 25–64 years. Joblessness is defined as those unemployed or not in the labor force as a share of the total population. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average.

Across racial/ethnic and nativity groups, joblessness declines as educational attainment increases and racial gaps in joblessness are mitigated. The ameliorative impact of education on joblessness is particularly notable for Black and white workers. However, Black workers have markedly higher rates of joblessness than white workers at each level of education, including among those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

The relationship between education and joblessness is a bit more muted for other groups. For example, Asian or Pacific Islander immigrants, who comprise nearly the entirety of the Asian American or Pacific Islander working-age population (89 percent), have among the highest rates of joblessness at each level of education, and their situation seems to get worse relative to other groups until reaching a bachelor's degree or higher, where gaps in joblessness are smaller.[46]

It is also important not to lose sight of the distribution of educational attainment when considering joblessness by education. Around 44 percent of US-born Black adults, 41 percent of US-born Latinx adults, and 68 percent of Latinx immigrants have a high school degree or less, meaning they are concentrated among educational attainment groups with the highest rates of joblessness.

Higher education does little to improve racial wage gaps.

Median Wages by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018
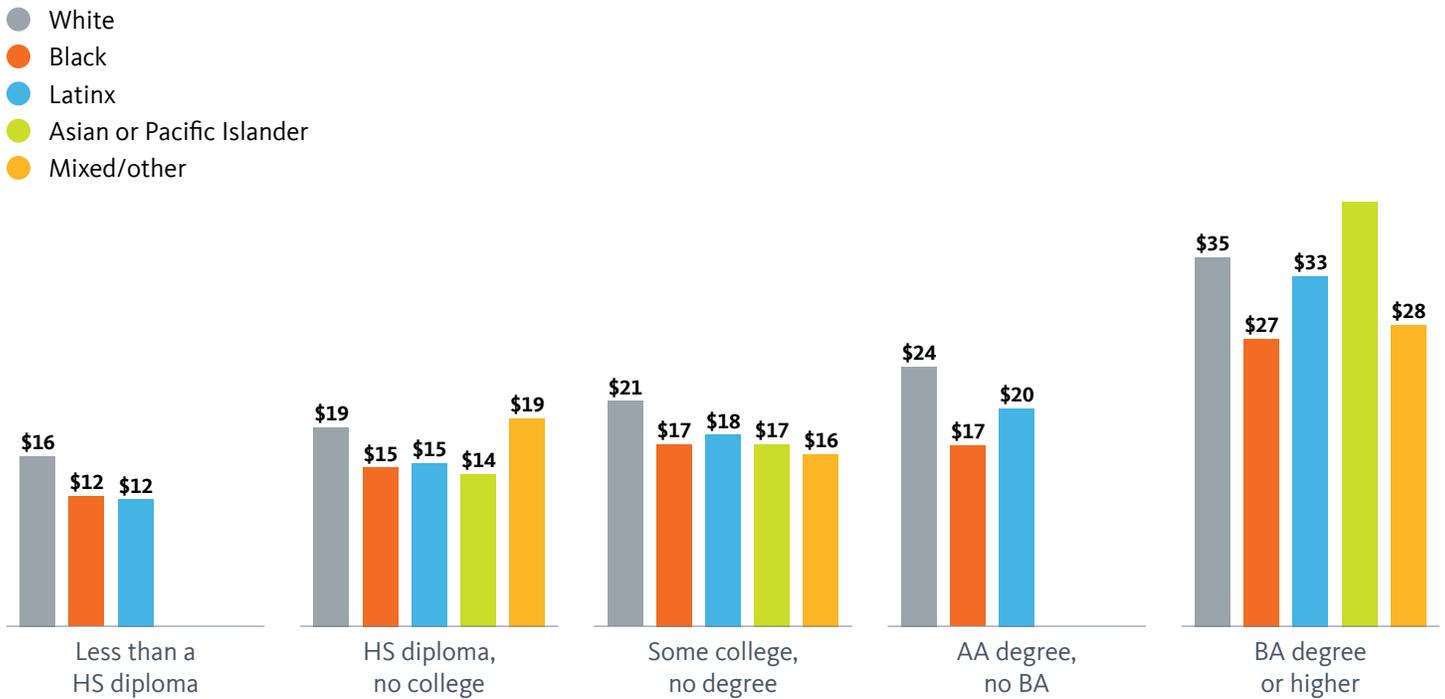
- White
- Black
- Latinx
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Mixed/other

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes civilian noninstitutionalized full-time wage and salary workers ages 25–64 years. Data reflect a 2014–2018 average. Values are in 2018 dollars.

Higher educational attainment is associated with higher median wages across all racial/ethnic groups in Metro Detroit, but racial inequities persist. The median wage of white workers with only a high school diploma is $19 per hour, which is 12 percent more than the median wage of Black workers with an associate's degree ($17).

Racial wage gaps are also evident at each level of education. With few exceptions, white workers earn more than people or color at every level of education. Among those with only a high school diploma (or equivalent), white workers and multiracial workers (or those of another race not represented among the predominant groups) enjoy the highest median wage of $19 per hour, while among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, Asian American or Pacific Islander workers have the highest median wage ($40 per hour).

The relative wage gains with further education are not equivalent across different racial/ethnic groups. The median hourly wage premium for earning a bachelor's degree as opposed to a high school diploma is highest for Asian American or Pacific Islander workers at about 186 percent (a $26 per hour gain) while it is lowest for multiracial workers at 47 percent (a $9 gain). The same educational achievement carries around a 120 percent median hourly wage increase for Latinx workers (an $18 gain), followed by an 84 percent increase for white workers (a $16 gain), and an 80 percent increase for Black workers (a $12 gain). The relative percentage-point wage gains from obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher compared to a high school degree are similar for Black and white workers, meaning that increased educational attainment has little impact on Black-white wage gaps. The one in five Black workers who do attain a four-year degree still find themselves earning a median wage that is $8 per hour (or 23 percent) lower than their white counterparts.

7.0
WORKERS IN THE REGION FACE A SHORTAGE OF GOOD JOBS

As the data above reveal, not everyone who wants to work in Metro Detroit has a job, and not all workers are paid a basic living wage. As the economy and labor market evolve toward advanced industries and services, far too few workers are benefiting from the region's growth. To grow an equitable economy, local leaders need to both increase the number of good jobs and ensure equitable access to those jobs.

To better understand the shortage of good jobs in the region, we analyzed access to good jobs in Detroit by race/ethnicity and level of required education, using the localized definition of good jobs summarized in the table below.

Characteristics and Examples of Good Jobs by Typical Education Requirements, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2019

Characteristics of good jobs

- **Living-wage compensation:** Average wage for the occupation is sufficient to sustain a family of two working adults and two children—$33,779 per worker (or a total income of about $67,500 for a family of four) in Detroit.[47] This figure is on par with the annual ALICE family budget for similar households ($64,100).[48]

- **Stable or growing base of employment:** The number of jobs is projected to grow or to remain relatively stable for the next decade—employment in the occupation is not declining by more than 10 percent over 10 years, or more than 2 percent over 10 years for small occupations.

- **Automation resilient:** The occupation has a probability of computerization lower than 50 percent, given the full array of tasks that comprise the role.

Example "good jobs" accessible to workers by level of education

High school diploma or less:	Postsecondary certificate or license or vocational training through an apprenticeship:	Associate's degree:	Bachelor's degree or higher:
• Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel • First-line supervisors of mechanics, installers, and repairers • Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents	• Electricians • First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers • Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	• Registered nurses • Diagnostic medical sonographers • Respiratory therapists	• Financial managers • Software developers • Mechanical engineers

More Than 1.4 Million Workers in Metro Detroit Do Not Have Good Jobs

Fewer than three in 10 Metro Detroit workers are in good jobs.

Share of Workers in Good Jobs, Overall and by Educational Requirements, Detroit Metropolitan Area, 2018
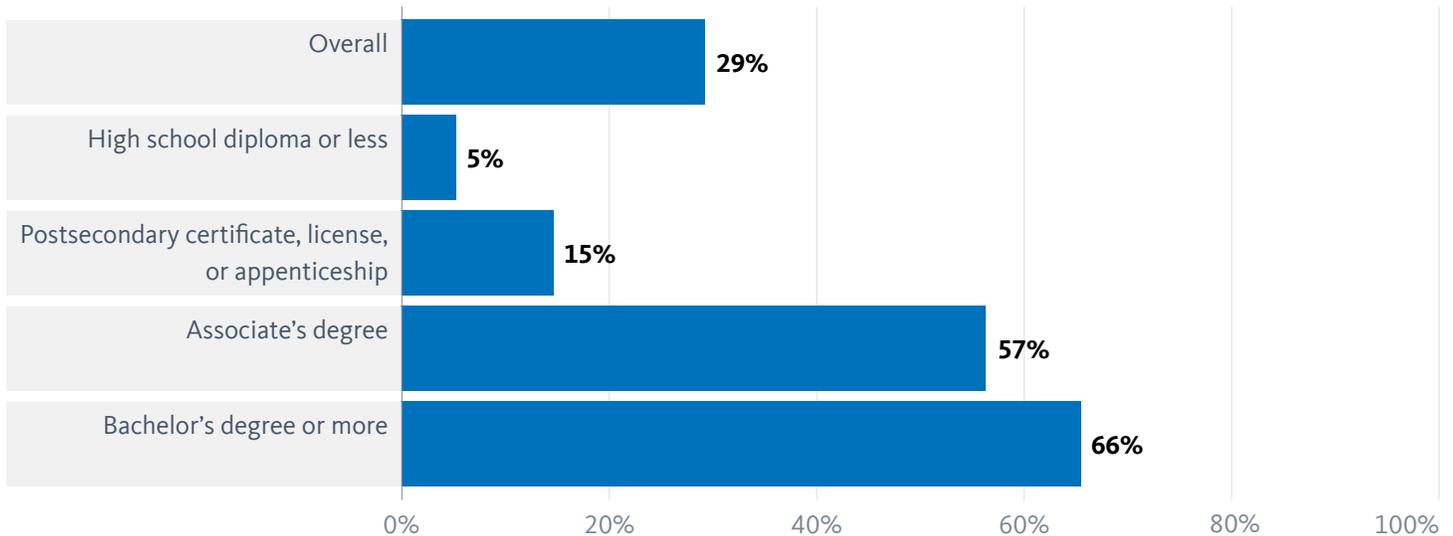
Category	Share
Overall	29%
High school diploma or less	5%
Postsecondary certificate, license, or appenticeship	15%
Associate's degree	57%
Bachelor's degree or more	66%

Sources: Employment from 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA, and occupational characteristics from Lightcast job posting data and 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.

The good jobs deficit in Metro Detroit is deep: only 29 percent of the region's 2 million workers are in good jobs. The share of workers in good jobs increases as the level of education required for the job increases, but even among occupations that require non-degree postsecondary certifications, licenses, or apprenticeships, just 15 percent of workers are in good jobs. A slim majority of jobs that require an associate's degree (57 percent) and 66 percent of bachelor's degree jobs are good jobs, but these educational requirements are a systemic barrier for many.

Nearly 1 million Metro Detroit jobs require no more than a high school diploma, but only 5 percent of them are good jobs.

Distribution of Employment by Educational Requirements and Job Quality, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

🔴 Workers not in good jobs
🟢 Workers in good jobs

Sources: Employment from 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA, and occupational characteristics from Lightcast job posting data and 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA.
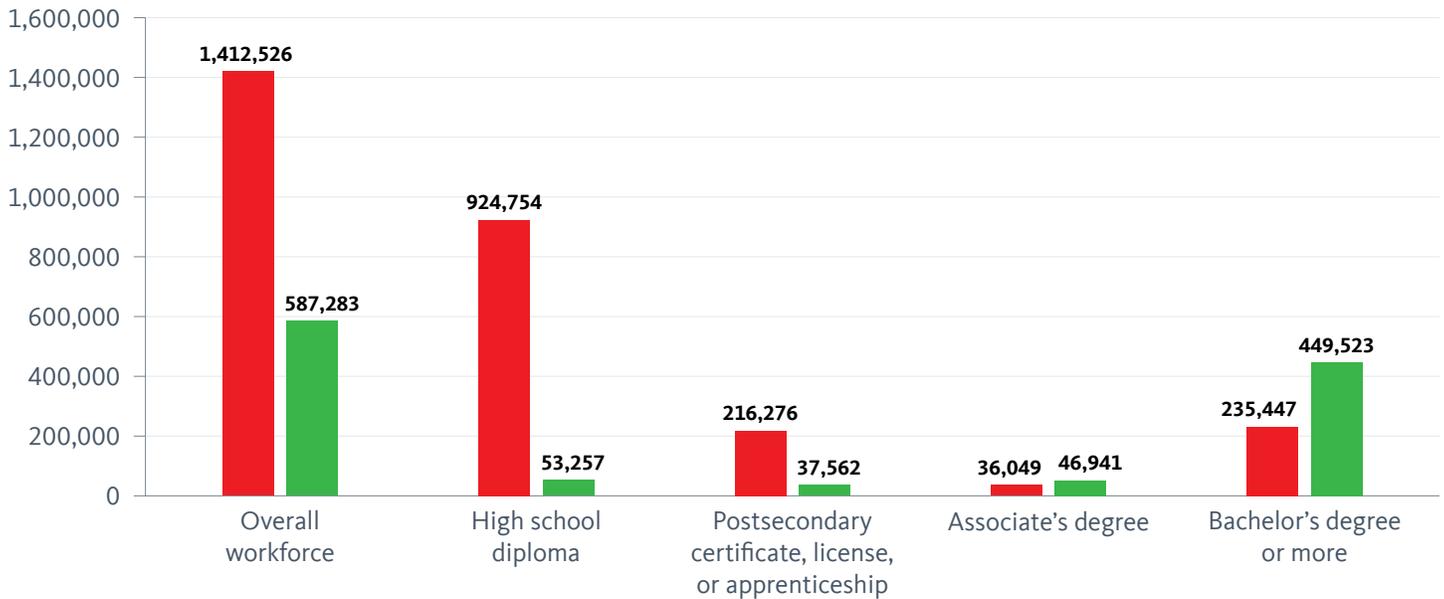
The distribution of good jobs by education underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach to create more good jobs, upgrade existing jobs, and develop race-conscious workforce development strategies to ensure people of color can access good jobs. Given that fewer than a third of Black and Latinx adults in Metro Detroit have a bachelor's degree, workforce intermediaries must consider interventions that will improve the quality of the jobs available to these workers.

One approach is to grow employment in the occupations that provide the largest number of good jobs that do not require a college degree though might require some postsecondary training. These include supervisory positions in retail, food service, manufacturing, construction and other industries, several trades, nursing, and other occupations described in the table below. Presently, workers of color are underrepresented in all of the 15 largest good jobs that do not require a college degree.

Good Jobs that Do Not Require a College Degree, with Occupational Characteristics, by Race and Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

Occupation	Total Employment	10-Year Growth Rate	Automation Score (Probability of Computerization)	Average Income in Metro Detroit	% Workers of Color
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	17,462	1%	2%	$72,817	**29%**
First-line supervisors of nonretail sales workers	16,261	-3%	8%	$79,836	**20%**
Electricians	9,869	3%	15%	$63,549	**17%**
Police officers	8,594	-1%	10%	$64,082	**28%**
Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel	8,009	0%	39%	$86,254	**17%**
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	6,246	3%	17%	$65,828	**12%**
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	5,611	4%	35%	$64,596	**15%**
First-line supervisors of mechanics, installers, and repairers	2,922	1%	0%	$68,426	**26%**
Firefighters	2,751	-1%	17%	$73,765	**12%**
Securities, commodities, and financial services sales agents	2,469	1%	2%	$105,846	**17%**
Heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians and mechanics	1,954	0%	43%	$53,384	**9%**
Financial clerks, all other	1,386	3%	40%	$74,840	**29%**
First-line supervisors of police and detectives	1,173	-1%	0%	$86,294	**16%**
Flight attendants	1,078	2%	35%	$53,007	**23%**
First-line supervisors of protective service workers, all other	1,063	1%	1%	$56,183	**27%**

Sources: Employment from 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA, and occupational characteristics from Lightcast job posting data and 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Data formatted in red indicate underrepresentation of this race/ethnicity group relative to their representation in all occupations that do not require a college degree.

Major Racial Inequities Exist in Access to Good Jobs

White workers are overrepresented in good jobs overall, and particularly overrepresented in good jobs that do not require any postsecondary education.

Distribution of Workers by Race/Ethnicity, Job Quality, and Educational Requirements, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

- 🟠 Black
- 🔵 Latinx
- 🟢 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 🔴 Native American
- 🟡 Mixed/other
- ⚪ White

Overall workforce

Workers not in good jobs: 23% 5% 3% 2% 68%

Workers in good jobs: 11% 3% 9% 2% 76%

High school diploma

Workers not in good jobs: 25% 5% 3% 2% 65%

Workers in good jobs: 14% 3% 3% 2% 77%

Postsecondary certificate, license, or apprenticeship

Workers not in good jobs: 24% 5% 3% 1% 68%

Workers in good jobs: 12% 4% 1% 83%

Associate's degree

Workers not in good jobs: 14% 3% 5% 1% 76%

Workers in good jobs: 12% 2% 9% 2% 75%

Bachelor's degree or higher

Workers not in good jobs: 14% 2% 3% 1% 78%

Workers in good jobs: 10% 3% 10% 2% 75%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
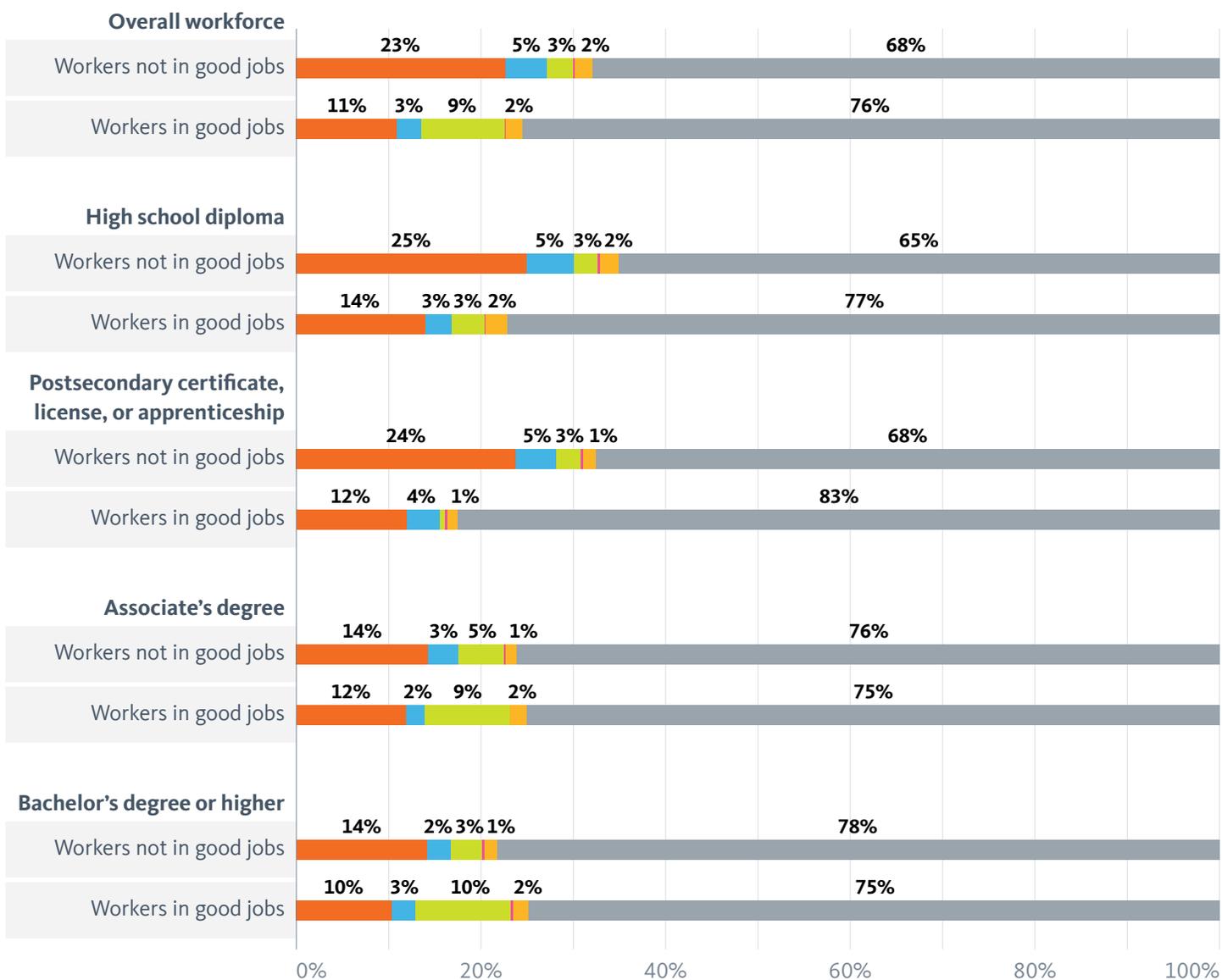
Examining good jobs by race and education requirements, we find large inequities: white workers are overrepresented in good jobs overall, and particularly overrepresented in good jobs that do not require a college degree—the very jobs that the vast majority of workers of color are qualified to obtain given the barriers to higher education described above. There are very few good jobs requiring only a high school education: only 4 percent of workers of color in high school level jobs are in good jobs, compared to 6 percent of white workers. Also, 9 percent of workers of color in jobs that require nondegree postsecondary training, such as a certificate or apprenticeship, are in good jobs, compared to 17 percent of white workers.

Available Jobs in 2019 Could Have Closed Racial Gaps in Access to Good Jobs

In 2019, there were enough openings for good jobs over the year to close the racial equity gaps in good jobs at each level of educational attainment. For example, to close the racial gap in good jobs for jobs that require no more than a high school diploma, 6,600 workers of color would need a job upgrade; in 2019, there were 9,500 openings for good jobs at this educational level.

Still, 82 percent of the 201,000 good jobs available in 2019 required a bachelor's degree or more, underscoring the need for workforce intermediaries and employers to reexamine credentialing requirements and design pathways into these jobs for workers without a four-year degree, wherever possible.

Access to the three key dimensions of good jobs (family-sustaining wages, large or stable base of employment, and automation resiliency) varies tremendously between racial/ethnic groups. We found systematic inequities that have important implications for equitable workforce strategies.

- Only 4 percent of workers of color in high school level occupations are in good jobs. Among them, 43 percent are in living-wage jobs, 52 percent are in stable or growing occupations, and just 14 percent are in automation-resilient occupations.

- Automation risk is a substantial factor in the lack of good jobs in the region, and Latinx workers in jobs that do not require a college degree are most often at risk of automation-induced job disruption. For instance, 88 percent of Latinx workers in high school level occupations face automation risk, compared to 81 percent of white workers. Interventions to mitigate automation risk, such as expanded unemployment for automation-induced job displacement and career pathway programs that shift workers away from at-risk careers should include language and accessibility features that take into consideration the high concentration of Latinx workers in at-risk jobs.

- Nondegree postsecondary training such as a certification, license, or apprenticeship is expanding the living-wage gap. Only 43 percent of workers of color in jobs that require no more than a high school diploma are in occupations that pay above the regional living wage, compared to 50 percent of white workers. That gap grows substantially for workers in jobs that require nonacademic postsecondary training: 56 percent of workers of color are in above-living-wage occupations compared to 71 percent of white workers. Workforce intermediaries must ensure that nonacademic postsecondary training diminishes racial gaps, rather than expanding them.

Delivering workforce equity in the Detroit region will require not only generating more good jobs, but also ensuring that people of color are hired into them. Without policies and programs that connect workers of color to growth in good jobs that do not require a college degree, these opportunities will disproportionately benefit white workers. Additionally, programs and policies that benefit all workers should consider accessibility constraints faced disproportionately by people of color, such as language and transportation.

Projected job growth for Latinx and Black workers is heavily concentrated in low-quality jobs.

Occupations Projected to Add the Most Workers of Color, by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2020–2030

- 🔴 Black
- 🔵 Latinx
- 🟢 Asian or Pacific Islander
- 🔴 Native American
- 🟠 Mixed/other
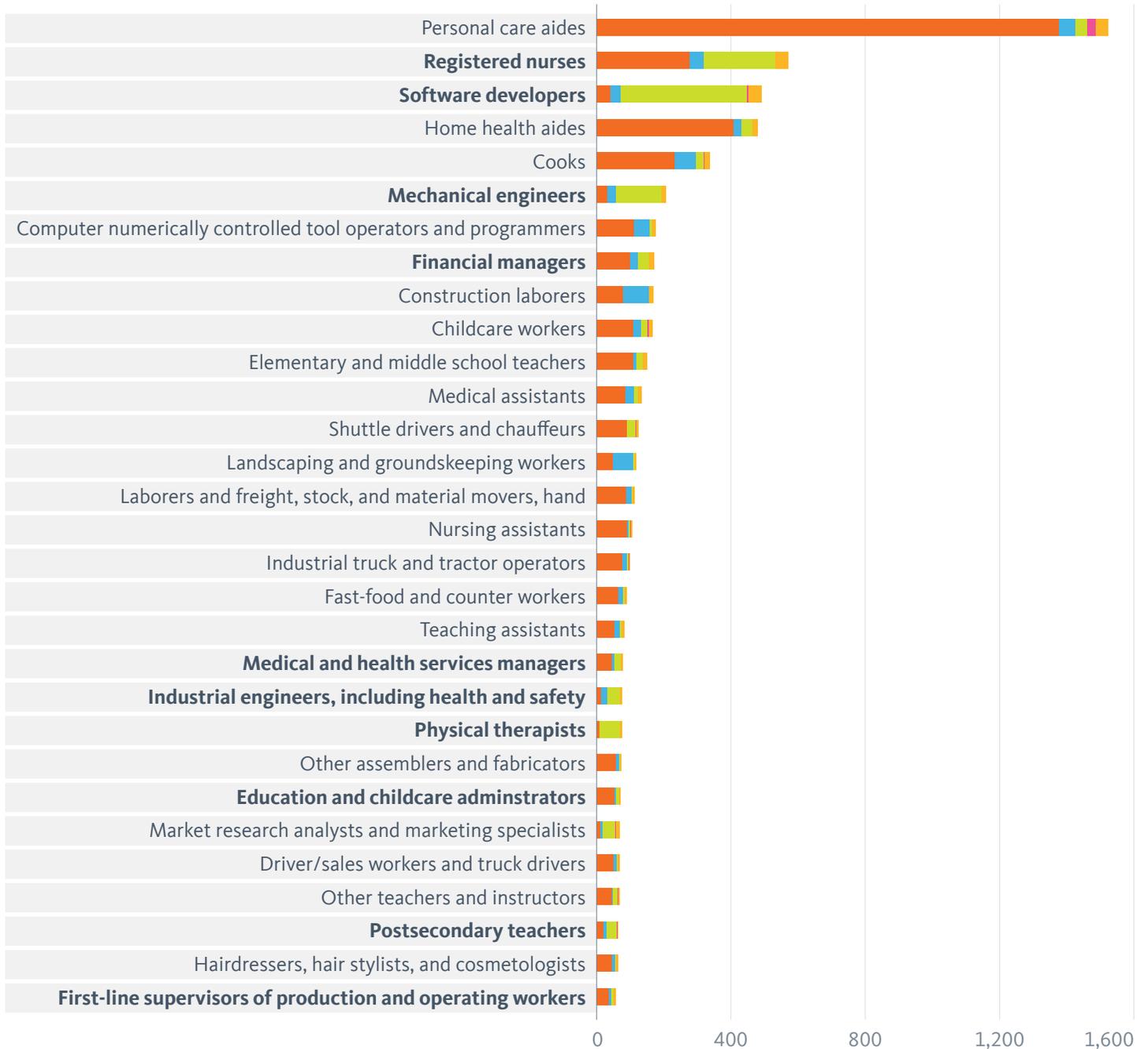
Sources: Lightcast modeling for occupational growth and 2018 5-year ACS microdata from IPUMS for demographic characteristics of occupations. **Note:** Occupations marked in bold are classified as good jobs.

The Detroit region's workforce is expected to remain roughly the same size over the next 10 years, but the region is projected to add at least 6,000 new good jobs. Developing high-impact strategies to dismantle occupational segregation is essential to ensure that workers of color have equitable access to these jobs, which are today concentrated among white and Asian workers. Just two of the 10 occupations projected to add the greatest number of Black workers are good jobs. Seven of the top 10 growing occupations for Asian or Pacific Islander workers are good jobs, along with four of the top 10 for white workers.

THE WAVERING COVID RECOVERY IS LEAVING WORKERS OF COLOR BEHIND

The labor market has been turbulent in the months since the Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020. The unemployment rate in Metro Detroit reached 23 percent in April and May of 2020, then came down quickly between June and November to end the year around 8 percent. Through 2021, the unemployment rate dropped further to 5.3 percent.

The crisis and recovery have unfolded unevenly across the labor market. Gaps in the unemployment rates and labor force participation rates of Black and white workers opened significantly over the course of the pandemic. Considering the racial stratification of different occupational groups in the region, these gaps have significant consequences for racial economic equity.

Black workers experienced significantly higher unemployment rates through the pandemic.

Unemployment Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2020–2021

● Black
● White
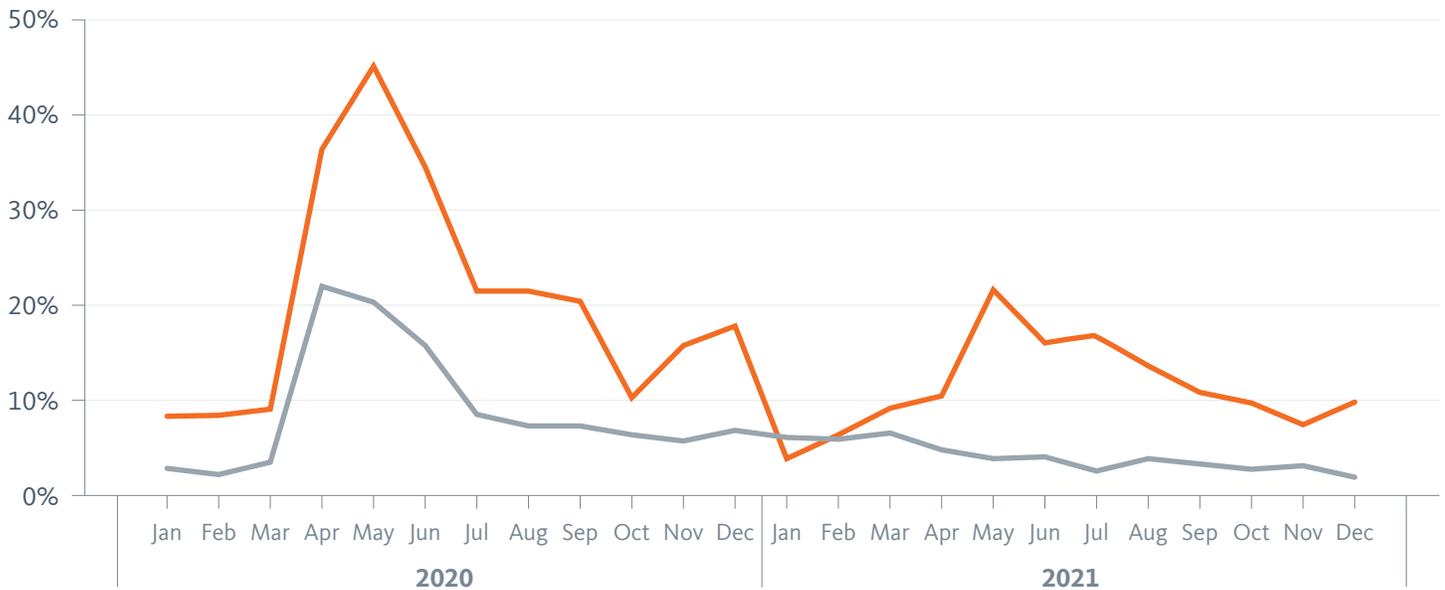
Source: Authors' analysis of 2020 and 2021 unemployment estimates from the Current Population Survey (CPS) microdata from IPUMS USA.

Unemployment rates rose for all workers in the Detroit region during the first half of 2020. Unemployment spiked later, during the summer of 2021, and this increase in unemployment was felt only by Black workers and not white workers. White workers have seen a steady decline in unemployment since the initial jump in early 2020. In 2019, before the pandemic, the Black unemployment rate in Detroit was 2.6 times higher than the white unemployment rate. In 2021, during the pandemic, the Black unemployment rate was on average 3.2 times higher than the white unemployment rate. Sample size constraints permit a comparison between Black and white unemployment rates but preclude an analysis of Asian, Latinx, Native American, or mixed/other race workers.

Black labor force participation has been more volatile during the pandemic.

Prime-Age Labor Force Participation Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2020–2021

- Black
- White
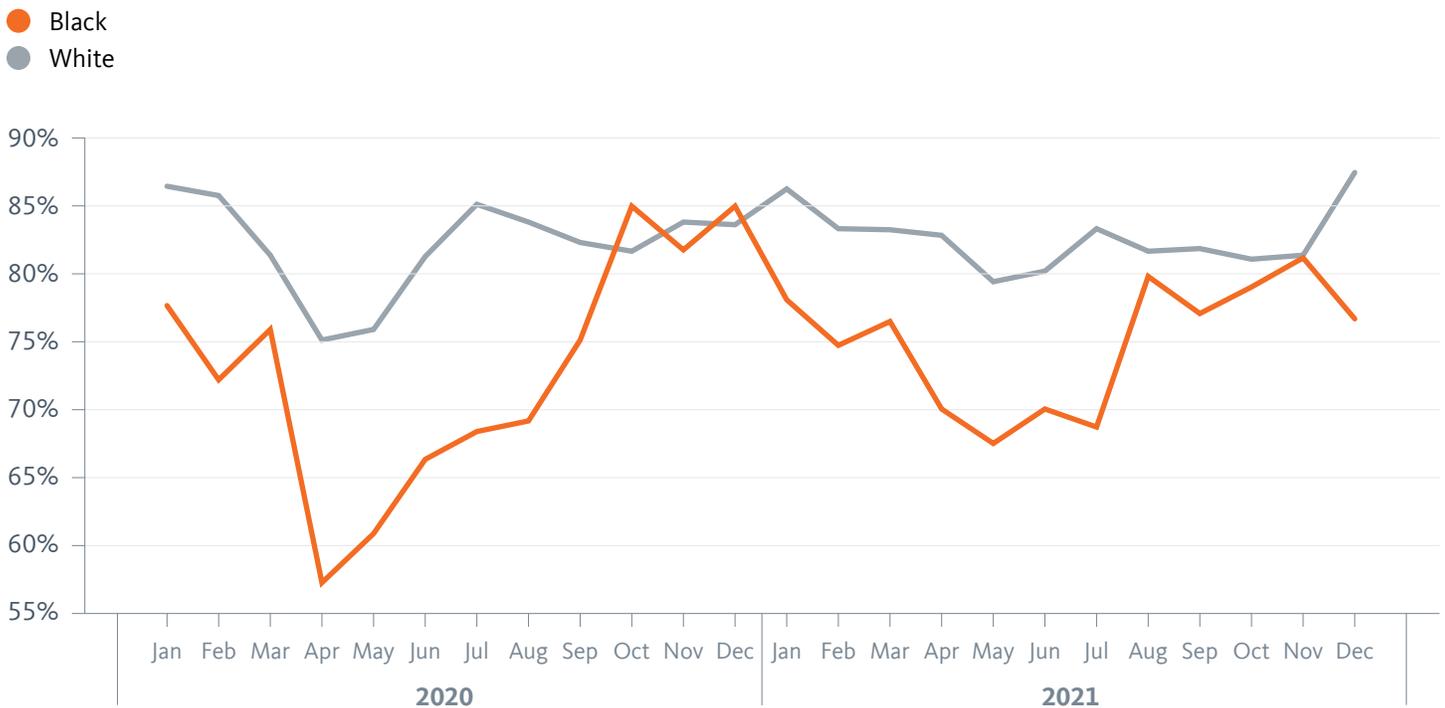
Source: Authors' analysis of 2020 and 2021 prime-age labor force participation estimates from the Current Population Survey (CPS) microdata from IPUMS USA.

The prime-age labor force participation rate is the percent of 25- to 54-year-olds working or looking for work. The prime-age labor force participation rate for all workers dropped as Covid-19 forced individuals out of the labor force. Individuals left the labor force for many reasons during the pandemic: health reasons, family responsibilities such as childcare or elder care limited people's ability to work,

inability to work from home made finding a job more challenging, as well as other reasons.

A larger share of Black workers left the labor force in both mid-2020 and mid-2021, coinciding with the increases in the Black unemployment rate. Throughout the pandemic, the Black prime-age labor force participation rate was much more volatile than the white prime-age labor force participation rate. The Black unemployment rate has also been more volatile than the white unemployment rate. This volatility can make financial planning more difficult, and it is a marker of greater economic precarity.

Online job postings for positions held by Black and Latinx workers prior to the crisis are recovering more quickly than for those held by white workers.

Labor Market Demand Index (Online Job Postings) Relative to January–February Baseline by Precrisis Occupational Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2020–2021

🟠 Black
⚪ White
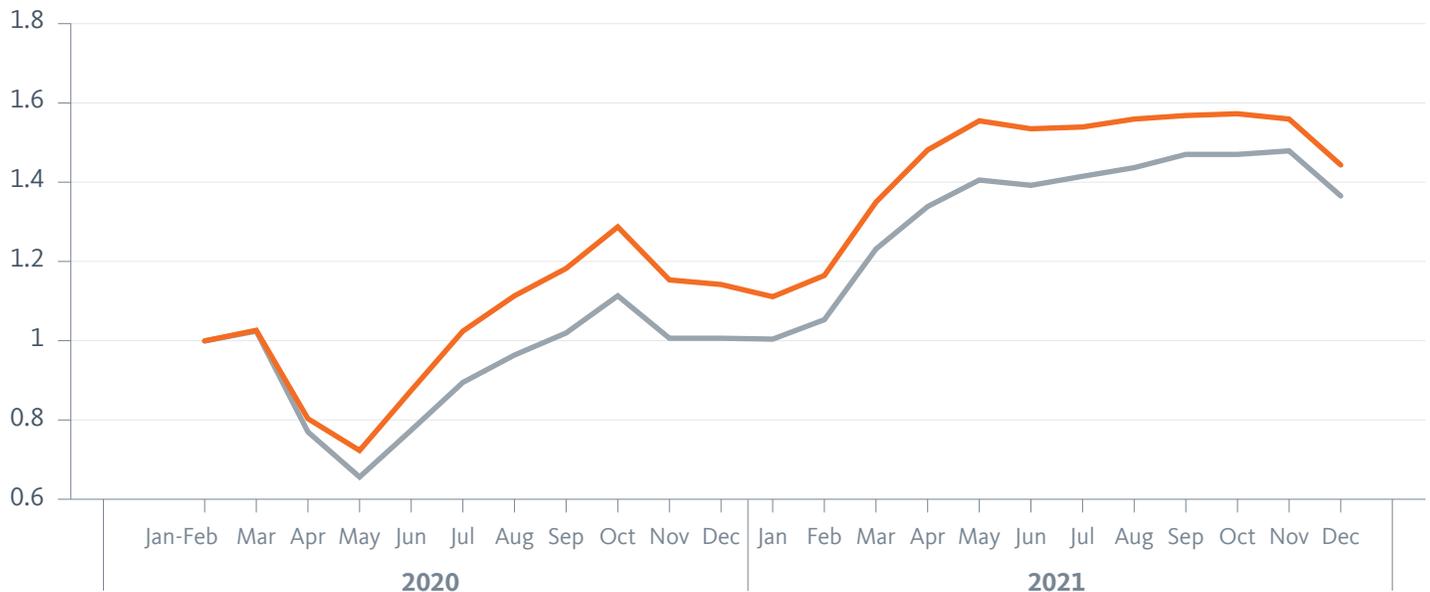
Source: Authors' analysis of Lightcast job posting data (January–September 2020), with job postings allocated according to occupational race and ethnicity characteristics from 2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from IPUMS USA.

The chart above uses job postings data to measure the change in demand between 2020 and 2021 for jobs relative to a baseline from January and February 2020. The chart shows how employment recovery could have been allocated to different racial and ethnic groups if recovering jobs went proportionately to the workers who held those jobs before the pandemic. For example, since Black workers made up 43 percent of health-care support occupations before the pandemic, this chart would allot 43 percent of demand for health-care support positions to Black workers.

The chart reveals that demand for jobs typically held by Black workers returned more quickly than the jobs typically held by white workers. This feature runs contrary to the finding that Black unemployment has taken longer to recalibrate to pre-pandemic lows compared to white unemployment.

A range of explanations are possible for the concerning divergence between the stubbornly high unemployment rate for Black workers and the return in demand for the jobs where they have historically been employed. The possibilities include the following.

- White workers may have more access to professional social networks that facilitate employment.
- Black households may face greater difficulty working or job-seeking from home. This could be due to factors such as lower rates of computer ownership and internet access, slower internet speeds, or higher rates of overcrowding.
- White workers may have been placed on furlough or temporary layoff rather than permanently laid off at higher rates, and the return in demand for these jobs would not be evident in online job postings.
- Inequitable access to childcare and other family supports may disproportionately impact people of color.
- Discrimination in hiring may have been more pronounced during the pandemic.

These effects underscore the compounding nature of racial inequities: in times of economic crisis, systemic inequities are often exacerbated.

In the early pandemic, increases in job demand were most pronounced among jobs that require lower levels of training and education, but increases in job demand are now concentrated among jobs that require medium to considerable preparation.

Monthly Job Postings by Degree of Preparation Required, Detroit Region, 2020–2021

- Little or no preparation needed
- Some preparation needed
- Medium preparation needed
- Considerable preparation needed
- Extensive preparation needed
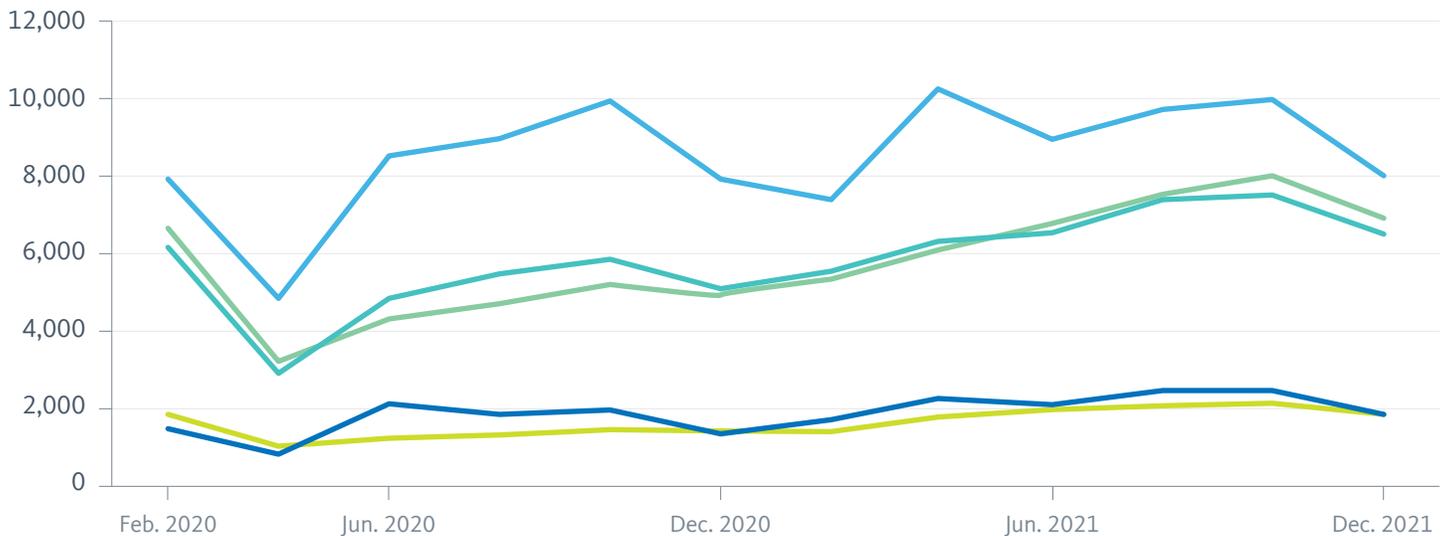
Source: Authors' analysis of Lightcast data on monthly job postings (2020–2021), using O*NET occupational classifications. **Note:** For more information on job zone definitions, see https://www.onetonline.org/help/online/zones.

In Detroit, the first jobs to return after the onset of the pandemic were those requiring "some preparation"—limited work experience, a high school diploma or vocational training, or work-related skills. Demand for these jobs only briefly dropped below the pre-pandemic level, at the end of 2020. The pandemic highlighted the immense importance of many jobs that require little formal preparation, such as frontline care workers, gig workers, production workers, service workers, delivery drivers, and warehouse workers who have kept the economy afloat.

During 2021, the most pronounced growth in job demand was among jobs that require some or considerable training, such as a bachelor's degree or years of experience. Demand for these jobs in Detroit did not rise above pre-pandemic levels until early 2021. Since then, demand has been above the pre-pandemic baseline.

9.0

ACCELERATING AUTOMATION PUTS WORKERS OF COLOR AT ADDED RISK OF JOB DISPLACEMENT

Automation, digitalization, and computerization are on course to radically transform work and jobs in the United States. Certain occupations will become obsolete; others will be profoundly changed, expanded, or combined; and technological advancement, especially in artificial intelligence, is likely to create entirely new roles across industries and fields. Some of these processes cannot be reliably predicted but given the current trajectory of automation-driven job change, people of color are at increased risk of job disruption that may push them into more precarious, marginalized work or displace them from the labor market altogether.

Automation risk is best calculated in terms of the likelihood of computerization of the underlying tasks that make up a given occupation, which can lead to worker displacement.[49] Very few jobs consist *entirely* of tasks that can be computerized,[50] but most occupations include enough automatable tasks to be considered at risk of automation. The national average risk is about 52 percent, indicating that about half of job tasks performed by the US workforce can be automated.[51]

Black workers are particularly overrepresented in automation-vulnerable jobs.

Automation Risk by Race/Ethnicity, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

- Black
- Latinx
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Mixed/other
- White

	Black	Latinx	Asian or Pacific Islander	Native American	White
Overall workforce	19%	4%	5%	2%	70%
Workforce facing high automation risk	23%	5%	3%	2%	66%
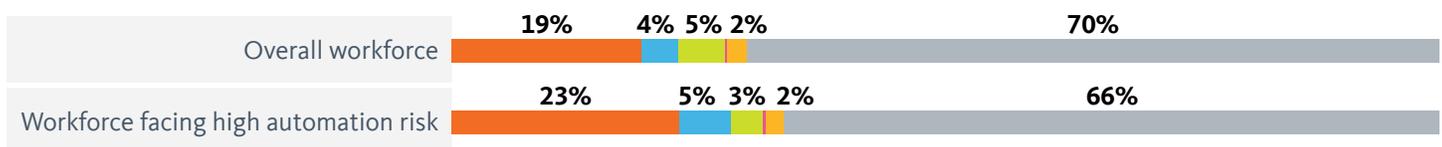
Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and automation scores from "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation" (Frey and Osborne, 2013). **Note:** Universe includes the employed civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 years or older.

Automation is a threat to employment growth in the Detroit region. The risk of automation is acute for workers of color, particularly Black and Latinx workers, who are overrepresented in jobs susceptible to automation. White workers in the Detroit area constitute 70 percent of the workforce, but only 66 percent of workers in jobs with high automation risk. Inversely, Black workers make up 19 percent of the workforce overall but 23 percent of automation-vulnerable workers. The concentration of workers of color in jobs with elevated automation risk is projected to continue over time.

Workers of color, those with less than a high school diploma, and non-English speakers are most vulnerable to automation-driven job disruption.

Automation Vulnerability by Worker Characteristics, Detroit Metropolitan Area, 2018

Detroit average	53%
Age	
16 to 24	69%
25 to 34	53%
35 to 44	49%
45 to 54	50%
55 to 64	52%
65 and Older	50%
Gender	
Male	52%
Female	52%
Race and ethnicity	
White	50%
Black	61%
Latinx	63%
Asian or Pacific Islander	36%
Native American	57%
Mixed/other	53%
Education	
Less than high school	71%
High school diploma or GED	68%
Some college or associate's degree	58%
Bachelor's degree	37%
Graduate degree	19%
English language proficiency	
Yes, speaks only English	53%
Yes, speaks very well	42%
Yes, speaks well	59%
Yes, but not well	69%
Does not speak English	74%

Automation Vulnerability by Industry, Detroit Metropolitan Region, 2018

Industry	Percentage
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	73%
Accommodation and Food Services	72%
Transportation and Warehousing	70%
Retail Trade	67%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services	67%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	65%
Construction	60%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	58%
Wholesale Trade	57%
Finance and Insurance	56%
Manufacturing	56%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	49%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	47%
Utilities	45%
Information	45%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	41%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	40%
Public Administration	40%
Health Care and Social Assistance	35%
Educational Services	26%
Active Duty Military	25%

Source: Authors' analysis of occupation-level automation scores from "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation" (Frey and Osborne, 2013), and industry characteristics from 2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from IPUMS USA.

In addition to race and ethnicity, a variety of other worker characteristics correlate with high automation risk. English language is associated with automation resiliency: workers who speak English very well face close to half the automation risk faced by workers who do not speak English. Increasing educational attainment is another pathway to jobs that enjoy automation resiliency. The degree that affects the greatest level of change is a bachelor's degree, dropping automation risk by 21 percentage points relative to an associate's degree. Additionally, compared with white workers, Black workers are 11 percentage points more likely to be affected by automation, and Latinx workers are 13 percentage points more likely.

10.0
A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
TO ADVANCE WORKFORCE EQUITY

Policymakers, employers, educators, training providers, and community-based organizations all have important roles to play to advance workforce equity in the Detroit region and to ensure that workers are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow with the skills, supports, and access they need to fully participate and thrive in the local economy.

A racial equity agenda to transform workforce ecosystems—centering the needs of those most impacted by inequities to maximize benefits for all—is the key to advancing a lasting recovery and a resilient future economy. This advancement will require changing how we prepare workers for jobs, transforming corporate culture, increasing overall job quality, and dismantling systemic racism, all while reimagining high-quality jobs and equitable talent development as an imperative for equitable economic growth and shared prosperity in the region.

The data in this report illustrate that securing high-quality employment is strongly correlated with attaining higher education and specialized training, but most of the available jobs in the Detroit region are in low-wage occupations that do not require or make use of such education. Of course, closing racial gaps in educational attainment—particularly at the bachelor's degree level—is a critical ingredient for achieving workforce equity. But just as critical is a transformative policy agenda to dramatically raise the floor on low-wage work and ensure that all jobs in the region are good jobs. This means not only increasing wages but also designing 21st-century benefits, building and protecting worker power, and investing in lifelong learning and skills development to nurture a diverse workforce prepared to succeed in an ever-changing economy.

Equitable workforce development is inextricably intertwined not only with community and economic development strategies but also with housing, criminal justice, transportation, childcare, and other issues. Achieving workforce equity will require coordination, collaboration, and population-level solutions across multiple systems. As the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities in both health and the economy, a cross-cutting racial equity agenda for the region's workforce should be the cornerstone of an inclusive recovery in which all residents of the region can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Our recommendations for designing and activating a workforce equity agenda in Detroit are described below.

1. Establish a unified collaborative to align workforce initiatives and help workers and job seekers navigate support and training services.

The Detroit area has no shortage of organizations and stakeholders doing innovative work to support economic security and mobility for workers, job seekers, entrepreneurs, and families in the region. However, the regional advisory group that informed this report described the challenges of a somewhat fragmented ecosystem in which inadequate channels of coordination and disjointed communication lessen the potential impact of various efforts and make it difficult for residents to navigate opportunities and access resources. Workforce service providers across this system can join together to better integrate their operations through the establishment of a unified collaborative designed to align workforce initiatives.

Local leaders would not be starting from scratch. Metro Detroit is home to various research partnerships, collective impact efforts, and community coalitions who are already practicing and contributing to workforce systems coordination. As just one example, the Employment Equity Learning and Action Collaborative convened by the University of Michigan School of Social Work is a cross-sector group composed of nearly 60 organizational partners, taking a systems-change approach to advancing employment equity.[52]

Structural racism in the economy cannot be tackled on a single-issue basis. The data in this report point to cross-cutting systemic barriers to racial economic inclusion in the Detroit region, from the uneven geography of opportunity to deep inequities in the social determinants of work. A collaborative hub could support a systems-change approach, aligning investment and action across different spheres of influence with a common vision for workforce equity. Such a partnership would be well-positioned to support and strengthen the development of equitable workforce solutions led by business, government, and community, including those described below.

A collaborative model for workforce equity could aid various stakeholders in breaking silos and multiply the impact of their efforts by creating shared action plans for issues that affect many people or many organizations. While there are certainly existing partnerships in the region—for example, among and between philanthropic organizations, employers, and educational institutions—a formal

collective body engaged in planning, coordinating, and executing programs designed to support worker success and meet the needs of employers would have much greater leverage to achieve impact at scale.

Local business leaders interviewed for this report noted the challenges they face in recruiting workers with both the technical and relational skills needed to succeed on the job. The collaborative could also serve as a centralized mechanism for employers to communicate with the wide array of educational institutions and community organizations engaged in worker training in the region and for service providers to communicate with employers about the needs and desires of workers. The University of Michigan, the Workforce Intelligence Network, and the City of Detroit are already engaged in this important work, which could be more deeply coordinated and scaled for even greater impact. This would provide a key point of contact for employers to strategize with training providers and intermediaries about their needs, access technical assistance, and connect with community-based organizations serving people who face various barriers to employment.

Such a collaborative should bring together the voices of diverse stakeholders across the Detroit region, including employers, workers, policymakers (staff and/ or elected officials), workforce funders, community colleges and universities, K–12 leaders, researchers, advocates, community-based organizations, and other service providers. Tapping into the specific knowledge and wisdom of local leaders in each of these roles would accelerate critical information sharing to improve existing systems, scale successful models, and design innovative new strategies across the region.

For example, a shared information system for training and wraparound services, coupled with resources and training to build the skills and capacity of case managers and other service providers, could dramatically improve outcomes for job seekers and the various organizations that support them. Beyond providing referral recommendations, this information system could share baseline information about clients that is routinely needed across organizations, details about the service they have received, and a navigation assistance model to systematize the provision of services and to guarantee that needed wraparound services are considered.

2. Strengthen education, training, and employment opportunities and wraparound support for young people and adult learners.

The diversity of the Detroit region's youth population can be and should be a tremendous asset to the region's future economic vitality, but far too many young people—especially young people of color—are locked out of resources and opportunities. To grow a resilient and ready workforce and lay the foundation for lasting prosperity for all, it is essential to ensure that all children in the region have access to high-quality K–12 schooling, safe and healthy neighborhoods, and the tools and resources they need to reach their full potential. For students who are not college or career ready when they leave high school, and for many adult job seekers, foundational skills programs such as adult basic education, literacy (including digital literacy) programs, GED classes, and English-language learning opportunities provide critical job-readiness training.

Focus: HOPE serves individuals and families in the region with an explicit focus on racial equity and core programming to support residents through different life phases, including early learning, youth development, food justice, and adult workforce development and education, as well as offering placement and retention services for employers. Clearly the workforce system alone cannot meet all the existing need for supportive and wraparound services required to close racial gaps in educational and economic outcomes, but workforce stakeholders have a clear role to play in upstream efforts to build equitable talent pipelines for homegrown talent and foster labor market advancement for students and workers of color. These efforts should include career readiness activities in primary schools, industry-based career and technical education in the secondary system that empowers students to make informed career and college decisions, programs to connect high school students who are not college bound to stable career pathways, foundational skills programs, earn-and-learn opportunities for both youth and adults to access high-quality employment, and strategies to increase higher educational attainment for low-income residents and people of color.

Numerous organizations and agencies throughout the region are already engaged in exactly these kinds of initiatives. Aligning and scaling programs like Grow Detroit's Young Talent and Detroit Public Schools Community District's career academies (among many others) to expand offerings and close gaps would bolster equitable local talent pipelines, preparing the emerging workforce with critical skills and knowledge and putting them on a path to economic security.

Employers and workforce intermediaries can also partner to expand apprenticeship opportunities and connect people of color to those opportunities through targeted recruitment, incentives, and wraparound services. Workers of color are underrepresented in apprenticeships, in large part because of inequities in recruitment mechanisms and the role of social capital and professional networks in securing such positions. Apprenticeships represent vital pipelines to industries and occupations in which workers of color are underrepresented, and they are an important upstream point of intervention to reduce occupational segregation. Earn-and-learn opportunities like the apprenticeship training program at Henry Ford Health can help lay the foundation for career advancement and economic security for adult workers of color and opportunity youth alike. Apprenticeships also benefit employers by creating pipelines of qualified workers with the specific skills they need, with proven models not only in skilled and technical trades but also growing fields like finance and information technology.

Importantly, given the relationship between earning a four-year degree and access to high-quality employment, closing racial gaps and improving overall outcomes in higher educational attainment is another critical strategy for advancing workforce equity. Existing regional efforts like Detroit Drives Degrees, which aims to boost overall postsecondary degree attainment in the region to 60 percent by 2030, can provide a strong foundation for expanding partnerships and integrating explicit equity strategies to increase educational attainment for local students and adult learners.

3. Promote policy solutions and support worker power and advocacy to raise the floor on low-wage work.

As discussed above, about half of the two million jobs in the Detroit region require a high school education or less. The good news is that there are plenty of jobs available to workers without higher education; the bad news is that far too few of those jobs pay a family-sustaining wage. Transforming low-wage jobs into high-quality jobs that provide adequate pay, benefits, dignity, and opportunities for advancement is a critical component of achieving workforce equity.

Wages are an important element of job quality and raising the floor on minimum wages would have outsized equity impacts, given that Black, Native American, and Latinx workers in the region are clustered at the bottom of the wage distribution. This issue has received renewed attention as the recovery continues to unfold, with Detroit city officials introducing a proposal to raise the minimum wage for municipal workers to $15 per hour.[53] While state preemption prevents local jurisdictions in Michigan from establishing minimum wages greater than the state rate (currently $9.87 per hour), as an employer the City of Detroit can set higher standards for its own employees.

Other employers can and have taken similar steps to improve job quality, and a reinvigorated labor movement across the country is organizing to demand higher wages, better working conditions, and union protections. Detroit is no exception.[54] Not all unions embrace racial equity goals and strategies, but union membership has been shown to increase worker pay and narrow racial wealth gaps, and worker organizing is a critical lever for improving other dimensions of job quality, such as fair and safe working conditions, worker protections, and fair promotion practices. Considering the policy constraints that prevent local government action on labor standards, supporting worker advocacy and organizing is a crucial strategy for improving job quality, including tangible benefits like health care, paid sick time, paid family leave, and retirement savings.

Alongside worker organizing efforts, advocates, workforce organizations, and high-road employers can collaborate to strengthen the social safety net and improve job quality and economic outcomes for all workers by designing and piloting programmatic solutions. Beyond the benefits that would accrue to workers in the region, such local efforts would also bolster advocacy for state-level policy change to protect and uplift working families.

In addition to advancing higher standards for job quality, workforce providers should partner with community-based workers' rights advocates to build labor rights and standards training into their curricula and programming. Workforce development programs are a key point of support and connection for low-wage workers and job seekers, especially those facing barriers to employment (such as limited-English speakers and immigrants, returning citizens, and people with children). Workforce agencies and employer partners ought to be key partners in efforts to address structural barriers to employment and promote equitable treatment for all workers, and resources to support these efforts should be embedded in their budgeting and strategic planning processes.

4. Build robust data collection and measurement tools to track worker outcomes, identify opportunities for employers, and inform system improvements.

Deep structural inequities are often masked by aggregated data and metrics that do not attend to the specific experiences of different groups of people. Businesses, government, and workforce development institutions should invest in robust, disaggregated data collection and reporting systems, and use granular insights on differential outcomes in order to drive systems change. Local data leaders who could contribute significant insights and guidance in this process include the Employment Equity Learning and Action Collaborative; Detroit Future City (which recently released an in-depth data profile of the city, *The State of Economic Equity in Detroit);* and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (which produces powerful resources such as *Understanding Your Community: Labor Market and Workforce Development System Data Toolkit*).[55] An integrated data system could equip education and training providers to more easily track relevant workforce data to drive systems change. Key indicators might include program enrollment information, degree and credential attainment, and, importantly, labor market outcomes (i.e., employment status and wage data over time)—disaggregated by race/ethnicity, ancestry, gender, and income—to understand where the gaps are, inform program design and policymaking, and document progress.

Coordinated investments should focus on building the necessary capacity and infrastructure for service providers, educational institutions, and public agencies to collect and pool deeply disaggregated data across the workforce ecosystem, while protecting the rights and privacy of program participants and other residents. Building on the successes and lessons of efforts such as the Workforce Benchmarking Network (led by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce[56]), an integrated workforce data system could provide a powerful platform for systems change by defining population-level goals, tracking progress over time, and creating a culture of shared accountability for results.

Metrics can be used to examine disaggregated data at baseline and throughout the lifecycle of programs and policies to identify where inequities occur in these processes and to take corrective action to address biases and marshal the resources needed to reach equitable outcomes at each stage. Business leaders should use disaggregated data to guide policy change related to recruitment, training, retention, and civic engagement. Public, private, and nonprofit

organizations can embed racial equity measures in strategic planning, from education and workforce development to philanthropic efforts, labor standards law, and fiscal policy. For example, an equity-focused approach might set and track employment targets using the Black unemployment rate rather than the overall rate, in recognition of the fact that aggregate improvements in employment numbers have not closed persistent racial gaps.[57]

5. Support employers to transform workplace cultures and adopt equitable practices in hiring, retaining, and promoting career development for workers of color.

Educational attainment—in particular, a four-year college degree—is often used by employers as a measure of the skills and abilities required of workers in high-quality jobs. But formal education can be a poor proxy for job readiness and disproportionately disqualifies people of color, who are less likely than their white counterparts to have a college education. Job seekers without a degree are often left without any opportunity to demonstrate their competencies, and employers likely miss out on optimal job-matching due to credentialing requirements.

Skills-based hiring practices offer an alternative model for matching workers with jobs, benefiting both workers and employers by ensuring that job seekers have the necessary skills to succeed on the job. Industry partnerships can support business leaders in adopting more equitable hiring practices through learning communities that address the needs of both workers and employers and guide the implementation of skills-based hiring strategies. According to an analysis from Opportunity @ Work, this is a critical strategy to close the growing good-jobs gap for workers without a college degree: between 2000 and 2020, the share of workers without degrees in opportunity jobs (those that can provide wage growth and economic security for non-college graduates) declined from 54 percent to 46 percent.[58] To test and design skills-based solutions tailored to the needs of Metro Detroit businesses, a pilot program of participating employers could designate learning teams that include recruiting and hiring managers, and the curriculum should include specific data on the impacts of implicit bias on both workers and firms.

The regional advisory group also underscored the importance of cultivating new narratives and cultural practices that reflect an expanded understanding of the workforce development ecosystem. This includes supporting employers to develop greater cultural competency among leadership and hiring managers and other equity-building practices such as shortening and simplifying the hiring process; investing in essential skills training; setting equity targets (and aligned strategies) for recruitment; and building and promoting internal career pathways for employees, ensuring they understand what it takes to advance and providing upskilling opportunities in the workplace.

To advance equitable outcomes for incumbent workers, workforce development efforts should also leverage sectoral partnerships to promote career pathways that build on quality entry-level opportunities available to workers without a college degree. With an explicit focus on racial equity, sectoral strategies focused on building career pathways between entry-level jobs and high-quality target occupations can help to close the good-jobs gap for workers of color, meet the emerging needs of employers, and buoy the regional economy as a whole.

Programmatic approaches within sector-based planning should include targeted and well-resourced job-training grants, expanded apprenticeship programs, and subsidized employment opportunities designed with specific equity targets to ensure that they benefit people of color and disadvantaged job seekers. Sectoral partnerships such as the Health Care Careers Alliance[59] can also develop and promote quality career pathways; the tables below show how such a process could be carried out in Detroit's health-care sector.

The first table shows health-care occupations that require less than a bachelor's degree where workers of color are overrepresented; the second table shows target occupations that provide good jobs in the Detroit region. Health care-sector strategies should prioritize transitioning the workers represented in the first table into the jobs represented in the second table, opening entry-level jobs to sustain the development of equitable talent pipelines.

Occupations in the Health-Care Sector Requiring Less than a Bachelor's Degree with Good-Job Deficits, Detroit Metropolitan Area, 2018

Occupation	Workers of Color	% Workers of Color	% Black	% Latinx	% Asian or Pacific Islander	% Native American	% Mixed/ Other
Nursing assistants	12,255	59%	52%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Personal care aides	10,731	53%	48%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	5003	54%	47%	4%	2%	<1%	1%
Home health aides	3750	62%	52%	3%	4%	<1%	2%
Medical assistants	2739	31%	21%	5%	3%	<1%	2%
Clinical laboratory technologists and technicians	1677	31%	21%	2%	8%	<1%	1%
Pharmacy technicians	1552	34%	21%	3%	6%	1%	3%
Dental assistants	1386	31%	18%	7%	4%	<1%	2%
Other health-care support workers	1176	47%	42%	2%	2%	1%	<1%
Miscellaneous health technologists and technicians	1059	47%	35%	2%	9%	<1%	1%
Orderlies and psychiatric aides	786	64%	60%	<1%	4%	<1%	<1%
Medical records specialists	631	32%	27%	1%	3%	<1%	<1%
Phlebotomists	628	45%	34%	3%	4%	<1%	3%
Emergency medical technicians	611	19%	17%	2%	<1%	<1%	1%
Massage therapists	569	23%	11%	2%	6%	<1%	3%
Radiologic technologists and technicians	493	15%	7%	3%	5%	<1%	<1%
Physical therapist assistants and aides	443	28%	9%	6%	11%	<1%	2%
Psychiatric technicians	434	51%	41%	<1%	7%	<1%	2%
Opticians, dispensing	297	32%	13%	7%	11%	<1%	2%
Medical transcriptionists	278	29%	20%	<1%	9%	<1%	<1%
Surgical technologists	273	17%	9%	1%	3%	<1%	4%
Occupational therapy assistants and aides	264	49%	43%	<1%	6%	<1%	<1%
Veterinary technologists and technicians	220	17%	7%	9%	<1%	<1%	1%
Dental hygienists	201	6%	4%	1%	2%	<1%	<1%
Dietetic technicians and ophthalmic medical technicians	176	72%	72%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	142	25%	17%	1%	<1%	<1%	6%
Pharmacy aides	91	15%	9%	<1%	2%	<1%	4%
Veterinary assistants and laboratory animal caretakers	78	15%	<1%	4%	4%	<1%	6%

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the employed civilian population age 16 or older.

Occupations in the Health-Care Sector Requiring Less than a Bachelor's Degree that Meet All Good-Job Qualities, Detroit Metropolitan Area, 2018

Occupation	Workers of Color	% Workers of Color	% Black	% Latinx	% Asian or Pacific Islander	% Native American	% Mixed/ Other
Respiratory therapists	237	18%	6%	1%	9%	<1%	2%
Diagnostic medical sonographers	224	16%	5%	3%	6%	<1%	2%
Radiation therapists	18	8%	8%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Magnetic resonance imaging technologists	56	12%	<1%	<1%	9%	<1%	3%

Source: Authors' analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. **Note:** Universe includes the employed civilian population age 16 or older.

The Future of Workforce Equity in Metro Detroit

An equitable Detroit workforce will be one in which racial income gaps have been eliminated, all jobs are good jobs, and everyone who wants to work has access to family-supporting employment. Achieving this vision will require high-impact, large-scale, cross-system efforts to dismantle barriers and cultivate racial equity in education and training, hiring and advancement, and the social determinants of work that support positive economic outcomes for workers and families. Good jobs and inclusive growth are the foundation of an equitable economy. Amid the economic uncertainty of the current moment and the projected scale of technological transformation in the not-too-distant future, targeted strategies to improve job quality and ensure equitable access to safe and stable employment are essential to an equitable future of work and a thriving, inclusive economy in Metro Detroit.

11.0
METHODOLOGY

The analysis presented here draws from two key data sources: the 2018 five-year American Community Survey (ACS) microdata from IPUMS USA and a proprietary occupation-level dataset from Lightcast expressed at the six-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) level. While detailed sources and notes are included beneath each figure in the report, here we provide additional information on these two key data sources and methods used for the analysis of "good jobs," automation risk, and income/GDP gains with racial equity in the workforce. Unless otherwise noted, all data reflect the Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Wayne, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, and St. Clair counties in the state of Michigan.

The ACS is the largest annual survey of US households administered by the US Census Bureau, collecting a wealth of socioeconomic and demographic information. It is released in both a "summary file" format that includes a limited set of summary tabulations for a wide variety of geographies as well as a "microdata file" that includes individual-level responses for the survey and affords an analyst the flexibility to create custom tabulations. These files also come in both one-year and five-year versions, which cover about 1 and 5 percent of the US population, respectively. We use the five-year sample of the microdata to achieve a larger sample size, and we use the version released by IPUMS USA because it has been harmonized to be more consistent over time and augmented with many useful variables.

Unless otherwise noted, the ACS microdata is the source of all tabulations of demographic and workforce equity metrics by race/ethnicity and nativity included in this report. Also, unless otherwise noted, racial/ethnic groups are defined such that all groups are non-Latinx (excluding those who identify as Hispanic or Latinx), leaving all persons identifying as Hispanic or Latinx in the "Latinx" category. The term "US-born" refers to all people who identify as being born in the United States (including US territories and outlying areas), or born abroad of at least one US-citizen parent, whereas "immigrant" refers to all people who identify as being born abroad, outside of the United States, of non–US-citizen parents. The ACS microdata was aggregated to the detailed occupation level and merged with data from Lightcast to conduct the "good jobs" and "automation risk" analyses that appear in the report.

The proprietary data from Lightcast is based on job postings by collecting data from close to 50,000 online job boards, newspapers, and employer sites daily. Lightcast then de-duplicates postings for the same job, whether it is posted multiple times on the same site or across multiple sites. Finally, Lightcast applies detailed text analytics to code the specific jobs, skills, and credentials requested by employers. The equity gap for good jobs was calculated using occupation characteristics from the ACS (employment and average salary), Lightcast data models (typical education requirements advertised on job postings and metropolitan-area occupational employment projections), and the automation risk associated with each occupation from the 2013 paper, "The Future of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs to Computerisation" by Frey and Osborne.[60]

The income and GDP gains with racial equity in the workforce are based on a methodology used for the "racial equity in income" indicator on the National Equity Atlas. That analysis estimates aggregate income and income per person for the population ages 16 years or older, by race/ethnicity, under the status quo and under a hypothetical scenario in which there is no inequality in age-adjusted average income and employment by race/ethnicity. That is, it assumes that all racial/ethnic groups have the same average annual income and hours of work, by income percentile and age group, as non-Hispanic whites. The aggregate income gains are then used to estimate the gain in GDP by applying the percentage increase in aggregate income (for all racial/ethnic groups combined) to actual GDP as reported by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis.

For the income and GDP gains with racial equity in the workforce analysis included in this report, we replicated the same methodology used in the National Equity Atlas but restricted it to the working-age population (ages 25–64 years). Care was taken to ensure that the percentage (and total) gain in GDP we estimate is based on the percentage gain in overall aggregate income (i.e., for the population ages 16 or older) that we would expect if there were racial equity in income for just the population ages 25–64 years.

12.0
NOTES

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