

EQUITY GAP TOOLKIT

Concrete Actions We Can Take to Close Equity Gaps



The major healthcare inequities unmasked by COVID-19 and the continued disparate treatment of people of color in America make it clear that now more than ever is the right time to address major inequality issues within our society.

In addition to ensuring a more just society, closing these gaps would have a clear economic benefit. The most recent update to the Black Economic Equity report released by the Comptroller's Office highlighted several findings. According to Policy Link and Urban League of Long Island:

Long Island's economy could have been nearly **\$24 billion stronger** if racial gaps in income did not exist

Aggregate Black income on Long Island would grow by \$4.5 billion if gaps are closed

Homeownership Gap - National Home Mortgage Denial Rate in 2015



27.4%
Denial Rate for
Black Homebuyers



10.9%
Denial Rate for
White Homebuyers

Educational Achievement and Student Debt Gaps

\$1.6 Trillion

2020 National Student Debt Balance

5% (Nassau County)

More of the share of the white population have earned a high school diploma or equivalent compared to the Black population

204%

Increase in cost to attend a public university since 1988

18%

Advanced degrees gaps between the white and Black population in Nassau County

32%

African American 2015-2016 bachelor's degree recipients accumulated \$40,000 or more in debt

67%

Student debt holders that postpone major purchases (homeownership)



Visit Open Nassau for Concrete Actions to Close Racial Equity Gaps and View Work Cited:
opennassau.nassaucountyny.gov



OFFICE OF NASSAU COUNTY
COMPTROLLER JACK SCHNIRMAN

FACT SHEET

EQUITY GAP TOOLKIT

What Action Steps Can We Take?



Close the Homeownership Gap

- 1 Rating Real Estate** - Adopting a systemic approach based around the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)'s uniform four tiered rating system used to assess CRA performance could serve as a tool to rate real estate firms and discourage discriminatory practices. Low scores would damage real estate firms' public reputation and prevent them from expanding, while high scores would receive tax benefits.
- 2 Alternate Credit Scores** - Allowing credit scores to account for rent payments, utility and phone bills can help increase credit scores for people in these communities.
- 3 Increased Awareness** - Raising awareness around existing Federal and State programs that help first-time home buyers could contribute to a higher Black homeownership rate and ultimately reduce the schism.

Student Debt on Long Island



\$33,900
Average Student
Debt Balance



9.5%
90 or more days
late on payment

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2016

Close the Educational Achievement and Student Debt Gaps

- 1 Raise The Cap for Interest Rate Deductions** - Congresswoman Kathleen Rice introduced the Students and Families Empowerment Act which would increase the interest deduction cap to \$750,000, which is the same amount that same interest deduction cap for mortgages.
- 2 Student Debt Reduction** - Expansion of programs such as Public Service Loan Forgiveness and Teacher Loan Forgiveness reduce debt burdens of individuals in the nonprofit/public sectors.
- 3 Increased Financial Aid** - Funding financial aid can both increase college access and lower student debt. At the federal level, advocates have been pushing to increase Pell Grant funding. In New York State, the Excelsior Scholarship provides \$6,470 per year to cover SUNY or CUNY tuition costs for students whose household income is below \$125,000 and complete 30 credits each year. These programs can be analyzed and expanded to help more students

