



# Inequality and Poverty: Using Social Research to Inform Policy

NYS LIFE Conference  
May 23, 2018

# Objectives

- Provide information on NJ SHARES statewide model of delivering energy assistance.
  - Delivery system
  - Clients served
- Share the mission of the NJ Anti-Poverty Network.
- Provide background and discussion on structural racism.

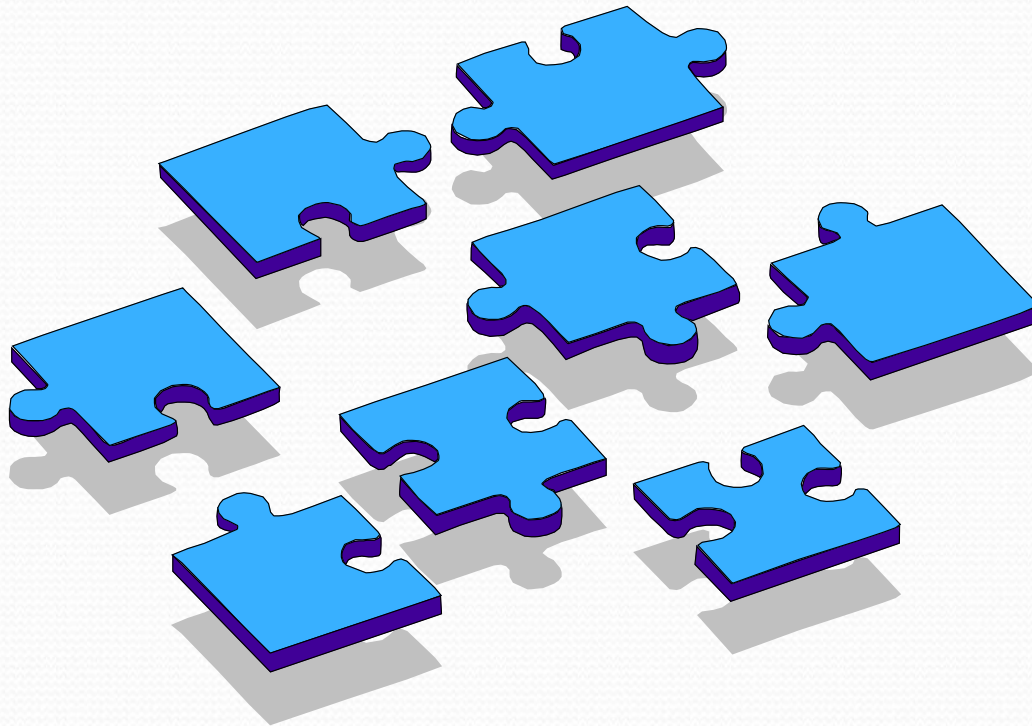




*Offering Hope & Delivering Help*



Assistance grants help our neighbors  
put their lives back together....



# NJ SHARES Programs

- Energy
  - Gas
  - Electric
- Telephone (basic service)
  - Verizon Communications Lifeline
- Water
  - SUEZ Water
  - New Jersey American Water
- ACE Helping Hands





# Highlights

Helped more than 185,000 households in New Jersey with \$75,000,000 in grants for electricity and natural gas.

- Administer energy fuel funds for NJ utilities.
- Administer Verizon's Communications Lifeline Program.
- Administers water assistance programs for SUEZ Water customers in multiple states.
- Administers New Jersey American Water's Assistance Program.



# Serves At-Risk Households

- 19% have children under the age of six
- 47% had a child 18 or younger
- 21% are single parent households
- 45% had a household member of 50 years of age or older
- 20% have a family member over 60 years of age
- 83% had employment income
- 59% have annual income between 200% and 300% of FPL



# Celebrating 20 years partnering to strengthen our community.





# Anti-Poverty Network NJ

**MISSION** is to fight poverty in New Jersey by empowering partners, educating the community, and advocating for solutions.

**VISION** is for a New Jersey where all residents have a realistic opportunity to meet their basic needs and contribute to the broader society, which will benefit from the full participation of all its members.



# Goal of Anti-Poverty Network

Seeks to prevent, reduce, and end poverty in New Jersey.

In order to reach this goal it is necessary:

- to increase the opportunities and reduce the daily challenges for people living in poverty, and
- to promote a more equitable and effective social system that builds the common good.



# Anti-Poverty Network NJ

## Primary strategies:

- Information sharing;
- Community education;
- Partnership building;
- providing a framework for public discourse on the causes, effects, and remedies of poverty; and
- advocating for policies and programs that prevent, reduce, and end poverty.

# APN Partners and Commitment

- APN Partners include:
  - people with lived experience of poverty;
  - non-profit and community-based organizations;
  - faith-based communities;
  - elected and government officials;
  - private businesses; and
  - all concerned individuals.
- We are committed to continue this work until we end poverty in every community in New Jersey.





# **THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH: RACISM, INJUSTICE, AND POVERTY IN NEW JERSEY**

**– A Call To Action –**



September 2017

**Produced by the Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey  
and the Structural Racism and Poverty Working Group**

With generous support from The Fund For New Jersey



# Structural Racism:

## NO

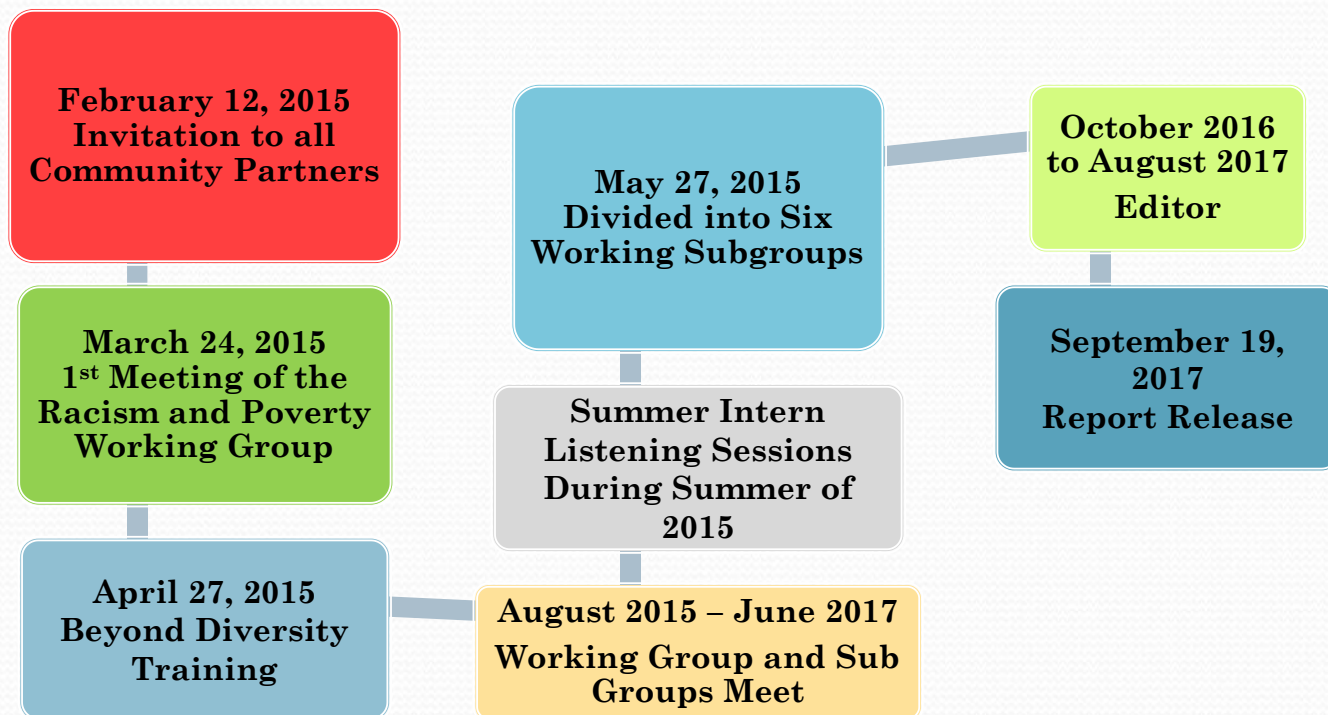
- Not intentional preferential treatment of one group over another.
- Not prejudice or expressions of overt racism.

## YES

- Disparate access to opportunity that is imbedded in the social structures.
- Result of historical conscious and unintentional policies, decision, and programs.



# Timeline for the Structural Racism and Poverty Report



# Findings

1. Result of historical forces and policy decisions
2. Two Separate and unequal economic ladders.
3. Structural racism in our state has characteristics that are particular to NJ
4. Persistent inequality hurts the entire state by limiting contributions of a large share of residents.
5. The entrenched disempowerment can only be overcome through a movement that engages those most directly affected.



# Systematic Solutions

- Structural racism an explicit public priority in New Jersey.
- Enact legislation requiring racial impact statements.
- Require data collection and dissemination by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status.
- Reinstate the independent Public Advocate Office.
- Strengthen the State Division of Civil Rights

# Specific Policy Recommendations

- **ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

- \$15 Minimum Wage / Livable Wage
- Equal Pay
- Wage Theft
- Tax Justice – Wealthy pay their fair share / EITC & CTC expansion



# Specific Policy Recommendations

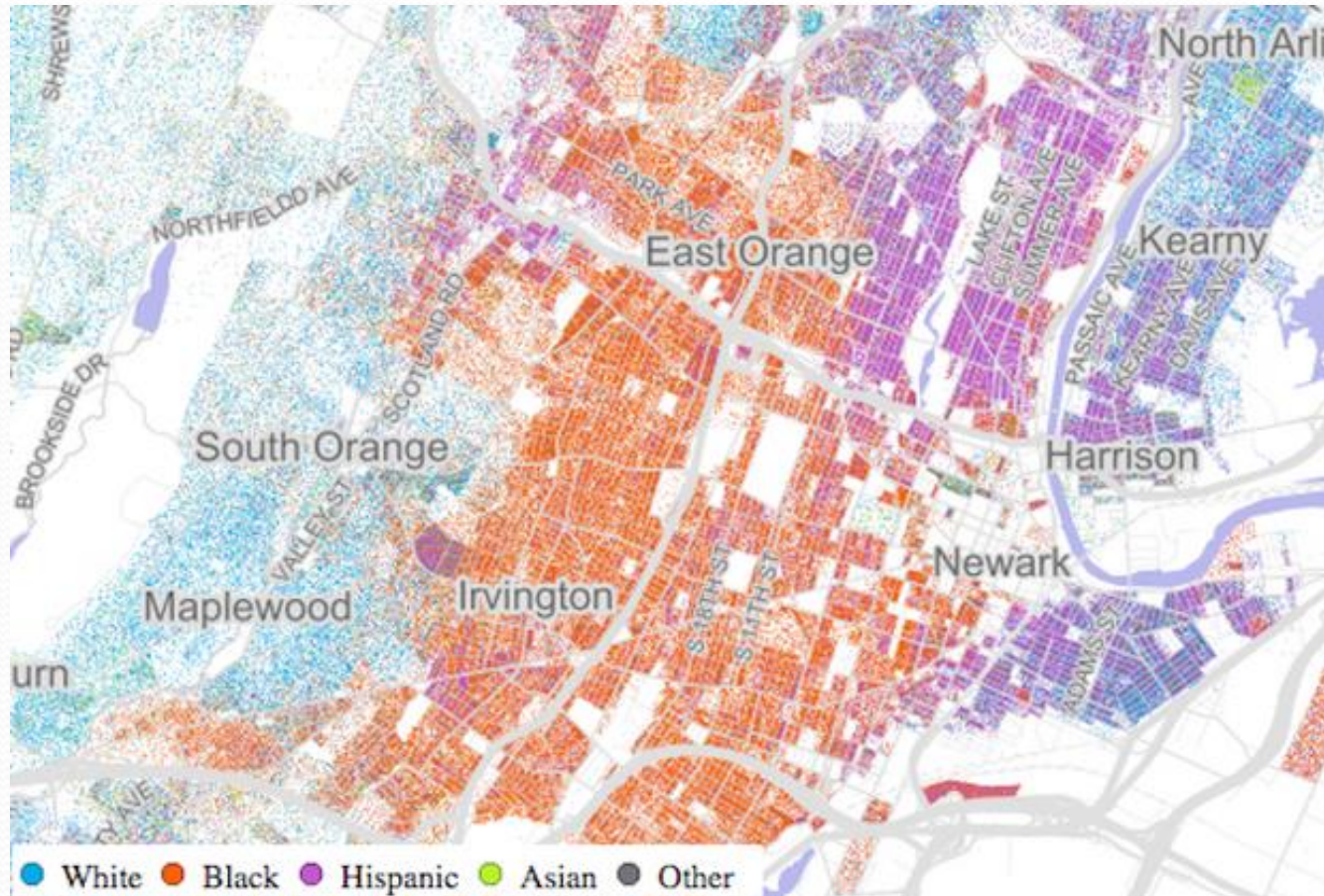
## ■ CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- *Require Racial and Ethnic Impact Statements for legislation*
- Legalize, regulate and tax marijuana
- Voting Rights
- Sentencing, Parole, Minimums

# Specific Policy Recommendations

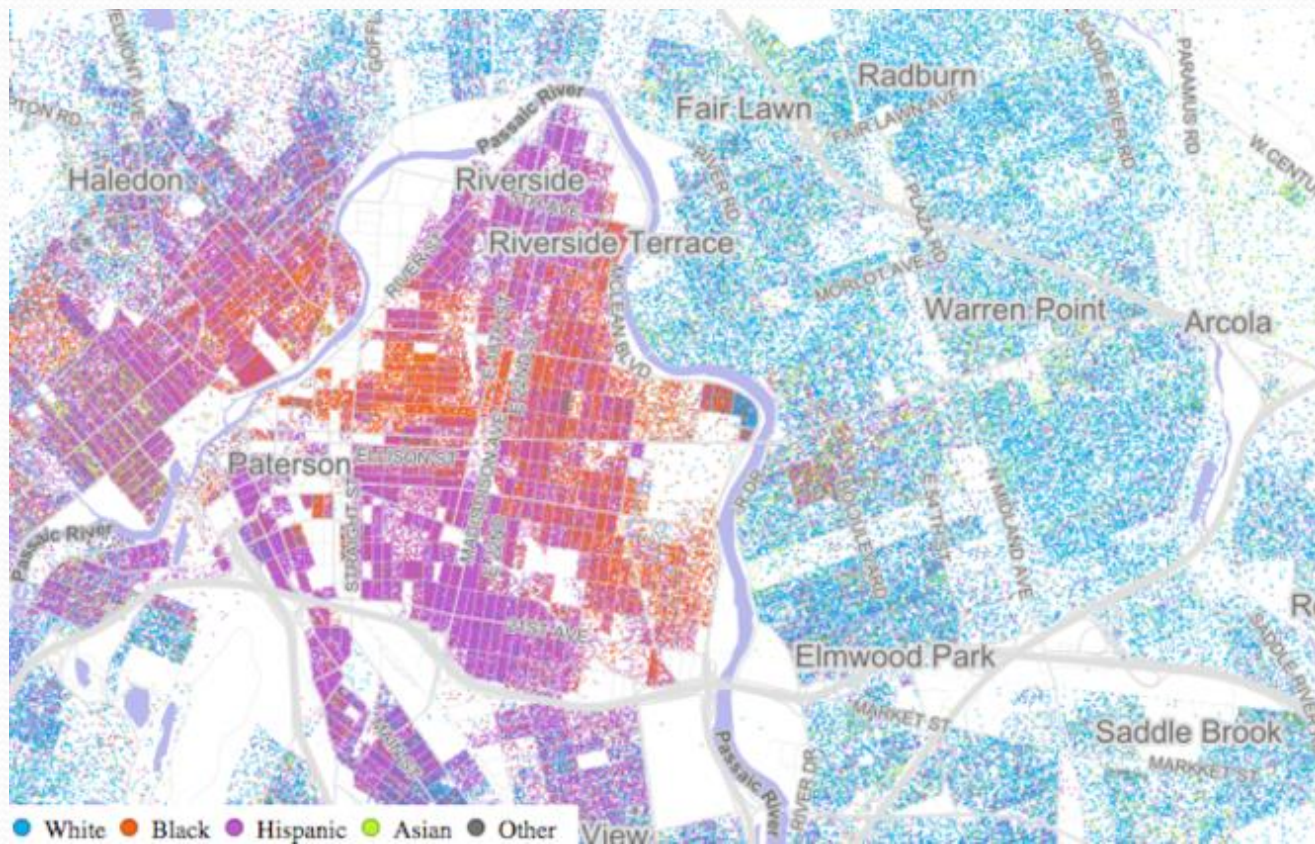
- **LEGAL AND CIVIL PROTECTIONS**
  - Increase funding for legal representation of low-income defendants.
  - Institute local civilian complaint review boards to increase oversight and accountability of police departments and officers.





Data map by Steve Sterling,  
NJ.com





Data map by Steve Sterling,  
NJ.com



# West Chester, NY

United States ex rel.

Anti-Discrimination Center v. Westchester  
County

# Levittown, NY

- How formal policies played a role in structural racism and segregation



# Specific Policy Recommendations

## ■ HOUSING

- 2. To the greatest extent possible, the state should implement a “carrot and stick” approach to eliminating racism.
- a. Such an approach would allocate and distribute an enhanced amount of state funds and resources — such as school aid, road maintenance funding, etc. — as well as discretionary federal funds, to those communities which meaningfully, substantially and measurably promote inclusion and integration, address environmental injustice, and affirmatively further fair housing. Conversely, exclusionary and/or segregated municipalities, which do not facilitate the actual provision of affordable housing in ways that reduce neighborhood segregation and significantly expand inclusion and integration, should have receipt of any such funding severely curtailed.

# Specific Policy Recommendations

## ■ HOUSING CONTINUED

- 2. To the greatest extent possible, the state should implement a “carrot and stick” approach to eliminating racism.
- b. State and local Consolidated Plans and Action Plans must adopt policies that limit the allocation of CDBG, HOME and other federal funds to governmental units that meaningfully and significantly AFFH (for instance, by adopting and implementing some of the overlay zones and other approaches described below).



# Specific Policy Recommendations

## ■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Provide enhanced resources and support directly to poor families:
  - a. Continuing efforts to enhance the services and supports provided to families with child welfare involvement:
    - i. Strengthening funding and services for family stabilization (especially housing assistance and flexible subsidies for economic need) to reduce out-of-home placements; and
    - ii. Reducing financial and logistical/regulatory barriers to placement in Kinship Legal Guardianship, when out-of-home placement is necessary.

# Specific Policy Recommendations

## ■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH CONTINUED

- Provide enhanced resources and support directly to poor families:
  - b. Strengthening the capacity of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program to provide assistance to the poorest children:
    - i. Increase maximum grant and eligibility levels over time to above 50% of the federal poverty level, and ensure annual adjustments going forward; and
    - ii. Remove the punitive family cap policy to ensure all extremely poor children have access to cash assistance.



# Specific Policy Recommendations

- **HEALTH, HUNGER, & MENTAL HEALTH**
  - Expand access to the SNAP program by applying to the Federal Food and Nutritional Services program for available waivers that increase eligibility to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, so that struggling families and senior citizens can access appropriate food assistance.

# Kerner Commission

- “Discrimination and segregation have long permeated much of American life; they now threaten the future of every American. This deepening racial division is not inevitable. The movement apart can be reversed. Choice is still possible. Our principal task is to define that choice and to press for a national resolution. To pursue our present course will involve the continuing polarization of the American community and, ultimately, the destruction of basic democratic values.”



# Kerner Commission continued

- “Opening up opportunities to those who are restricted by racial segregation and discrimination, and eliminating all barriers to their choice of jobs, education, and housing.”
- “It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress. It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens – urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group.”

# Next Steps

- Promote the report through media and APN membership.
- 6 statewide community forums beginning in April 2018 on each of the broad policy areas identified in the report.
- Work with state leaders, legislators, and stakeholders on implementing recommendations from the report.



# Questions





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[www.antipovertynetwork.org](http://www.antipovertynetwork.org)





thank you