



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## A JUST SOCIETY SUPPORTING HEALTH OF ALL RESOURCE SERIES



Compiled by

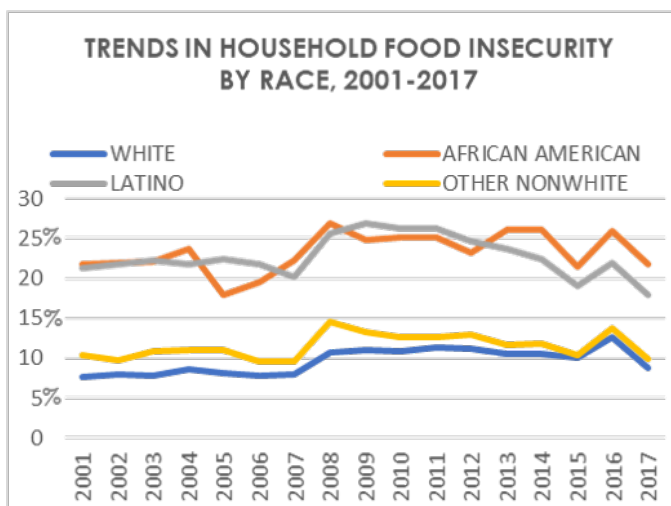


This factsheet was created by Alliance to End Hunger which was founded by Bread for the World. The ELCA is in partnership with Bread for the World and a member of the Alliance to End Hunger.

### FACT SHEET: HUNGER IS A RACIAL EQUITY ISSUE

#### WHY RACE MATTERS

In a food-rich nation like the United States, no one should go hungry, yet 12.5% of Americans experience food insecurity - the inability to obtain adequate nutritious food.<sup>1</sup> To end hunger in the United States, we must focus on the communities most impacted. While 8.8% of white households experience hunger, households of color experience hunger at rates of up to 21.8%.<sup>2</sup> We must consider the **inequities in every area of life** that increase vulnerability to hunger and poverty.<sup>3</sup>



Source: Report Series: Household Food Security in the United States, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2002-2018

#### SCHOOL

Our schools aim to provide students with the resources to succeed today and throughout their lives. Without appropriate funding, schools are limited in their ability to provide small classes, rigorous curriculum and nutritious meals (so students can focus and learn).<sup>4</sup>

- On average, poor nonwhite school districts receive about \$2,600 less per student than affluent white school districts.<sup>5</sup>
- Schools with majority African American and Latino students are less able to provide fresh fruit and low-fat milk options than majority white schools.<sup>6</sup>
- Schools with majority students of color are half as likely as majority white schools to adopt and enforce health standards on vendor foods.<sup>7</sup>

#### WORK

For adults, jobs with livable wages and benefits are crucial to avoiding hunger and poverty. Unfortunately, people of color face a wage gap and disproportionately populate America's low-wage workforce.<sup>8</sup>

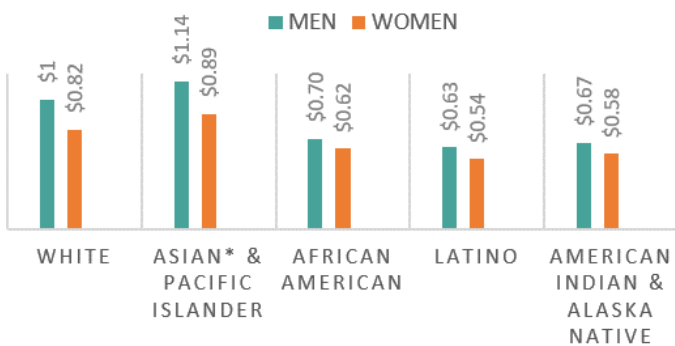
- African Americans face unemployment rates almost double that of white people, regardless of education level.<sup>9</sup>

As Lutherans, we foster "faith that is active in love, a love that seeks justice, and an insight that strives to discern what is right, good and fitting." We "join with others to remove obstacles of discrimination and indifference that prevent people from living out their callings." (Both quotes are from the ELCA's 1991 social statement Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective.) But social, economic and political inequality is acute, and indications of it abound. This series places before us the intersection of racial equity with environment, global, health, housing, hunger and migration realities. It invites us to look at obstacles and equip ourselves to advocate for a just society supporting the health of all.

- Only 38% of Latino employees and 54% of African American and Asian American employees have access to an employer-sponsored retirement plan, compared to 62% of white employees.<sup>10</sup>
- Upon retirement, households of color have less than one-third the average retirement savings of their white counterparts.<sup>11</sup>

**HOUSING**

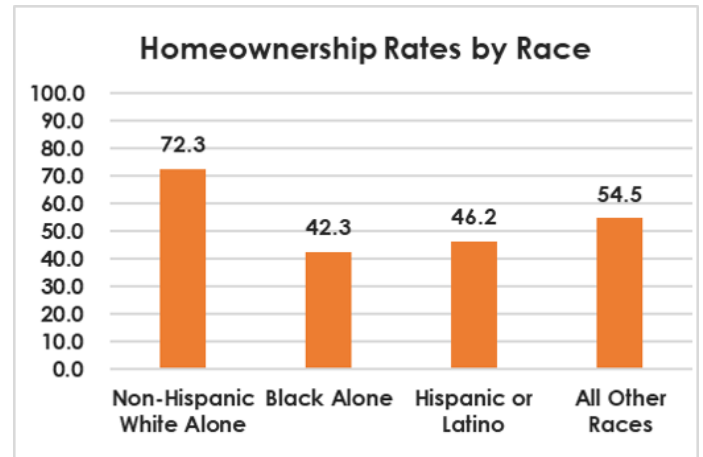
**IF WHITE MEN MAKE \$1...  
MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS AS A  
PERCENTAGE OF WHITE MEN'S EARNINGS**



Source: [The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap, 2018](#). \*Note: When statistics on Asian Americans are disaggregated, some groups, such as Southeast Asian Americans, also experience a negative wage gap.

Homeownership (a key wealth builder) and living in a neighborhood with jobs, healthy food and community resources all reduce vulnerability to hunger and poverty. Unfortunately, historic discriminatory housing practices have shaped today's housing market to limit housing opportunities for people of color.

- 72.3% of white adults are homeowners, as compared to 42.3-54.5% of people of color.<sup>12</sup>
- White people are more often able to receive financial support from their families when buying a home allowing them lower interest rates and therefore a lower total cost of home ownership.<sup>13</sup>
- No county in the United States has enough affordable housing to accommodate all extremely low-income renters.<sup>14</sup>



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey/Housing Vacancy Survey, February 27, 2018](#)

**FOOD ACCESS**

Today, people of color are disproportionately surrounded by food deserts.<sup>15</sup> The USDA defines food deserts as, “areas with limited access to affordable nutritious food”<sup>16</sup>

- Only 8% of African Americans have a grocery store in their census tract.<sup>17</sup>
- 24% of African Americans, 17% of Latinos, and 13% of Asian Americans do not own cars, making grocery shopping more time-consuming.<sup>18</sup>
- Food stores in communities of color are often further away and have fewer healthy high quality options.<sup>19</sup>

**HEALTH**

Lacking access to nutritious foods can cause disease and poor health outcomes that shorten life expectancy and cause burdensome debt.

- Low proximity to supermarkets with affordable, nutritious foods correlates with high rates of obesity, diabetes, and diet-related diseases.<sup>20,21</sup>
- Elderly people of color are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be hungry,<sup>22</sup> making them more likely to have to choose between food and medical care.<sup>23</sup>
- 44% of Latinos and 34% of African Americans did not see a doctor when ill for financial reasons.<sup>24</sup>
- in greater health risks for people of color. Analysis of conditions in the American northeast and mid-

Atlantic indicates people of color are living with 66% more air pollution from vehicles than are white residents. The study found that breathing tiny pollution particles from burning gasoline was on average 61% more for African Americans, 73% more for Asian Americans, and 75% more for Latinos.

### A note of appreciation:

This April 2019 factsheet was produced by Alliance to End Hunger. It is shared with permission. For more information, visit [AllianceToEndHunger.org](http://AllianceToEndHunger.org) or contact Minerva Delgado, Director of Coalitions & Advocacy, at [mdelgado@alliancetoendhunger.org](mailto:mdelgado@alliancetoendhunger.org).

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