

Equity Challenge Day 8: Modern Segregation in Michigan

Something to Consider:

Institutional Racism is defined as *“the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.”*

-- [Solid Ground](#)

Modern Segregation

When you hear the word segregation, what do you think of? Many of us think back to the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, American cities continue to be highly segregated, and the same is true for West Michigan. A simple glance at the **racial dot map** (see option 2 in today's challenge options) shows how heavily our communities are segregated by race, especially in the more populous cities and towns.

Significant disparities exist in our local communities, based on race, in the following categories;

- Educational attainment
- Household income
- Access to health services
- Stable housing

For a deeper dive into the data, take a look at United Way's Tri-annual Community Assessment for [Ottawa](#) and [Allegan](#) Counties.

Present-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and others. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions that keep it in place. Policies shaped by institutional racism that enforce segregation include redlining, predatory lending, the exclusion of veterans from the G.I. bill, and the forced segregation of neighborhoods by the Federal Housing Authority. As a result of institutional racism, racial stratification and inequities persist in employment, housing, education, healthcare, government and other sectors. ([Source](#))

Today's Challenge

Option 1: Explore the [Racial Dot Map](#) created by the University of Virginia, which uses colored dots to visualize how racial segregation appears in our communities. We encourage you to zoom into Michigan and your county to see how it plays out in our backyard. Read more about the methodology [here](#).

Option 2: Why are cities still so segregated? Watch this quick video where [NPR's Code Switch](#) looks at the factors contributing to modern day segregation.

Option 3: Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr.'s death, our nation is still divided. Read more from [The Economist](#) about how segregation exists today in cities across America and the costly impact it has on the future of our communities.