Racial & Economic Disparities on Pittsburgh’s Northside
Prepared by Pittsburgh UNITED
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The Northside of Pittsburgh is a diverse area, made up of more than a dozen neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods are thriving, while others wrestle with unemployment, poverty, little access to affordable housing and violent crime. Some of these neighborhoods are racially diverse, while others are largely segregated. The Northside will soon be home to Pittsburgh’s only licensed casino, a development that will affect the area in many ways. Every neighborhood in the Northside, black or white, rich or poor, will be affected by this development in different ways and every neighborhood deserves a voice in negotiating a good working partnership with their controversial neighbor.

**Poverty & Income**

Throughout the Northside **22.3% of the population is below the poverty line.** This population is not evenly spread out throughout the area, but is clustered in a few neighborhoods. Approximately one-third (32%) of all people living in poverty in the Northside live in two neighborhoods – **Northview Heights and Perry South.** Those two neighborhoods also contain 43% of all the children living in poverty in the Northside. The poverty rate in Northview Heights is astounding, 70% of all people and 75% of all children there live below the poverty line.

**Poverty Rates for Northside Neighborhoods**

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2 The 2006 poverty threshold for a family of 2 is $13,896; 200% of poverty for a family of 2 is therefore: $27,792
Along with poverty rates, income levels vary dramatically from neighborhood to neighborhood as well. Almost half the households (48.3%) in Perry South had an income below $25,000, while in abutting Perry North less than a third (27.7%) of the households were in that income level. On the other side of the spectrum, only 13.4% of households in Perry South had an income of $60,000 or more, while 26.9% of the households in Perry North were at that level. Once again the starkest contrast is with Northview Heights where 85.8% of the households were below $25,000 and less than one percent (0.5%) of the households were at or above $60,000. One neighborhood to the north in Summer Hill, 24.4% of households were below $25,000 and 24% of households were at or above $60,000.

**Economic disparity on the Northside corresponds directly to racial disparity.** The disparity in income between Perry South and Perry North, between Northview Heights and Summer Hill, is matched with differences in racial makeup. Perry South and Northview Heights are 65% and 96.1% black, while Perry North and Summer Hill are 23.9% and 12.7% black.

The average black population for the Northside is 36.6%. **Every single neighborhood that had a higher than average percentage of black population also had a higher than average poverty rate (Fineview, Central Northside, Perry South, California-Kirkbride, Manchester and Northview Heights).** With the exception of East Allegheny and Spring Hill-City View, every neighborhood with a lower than average percentage of black population also had a lower than average poverty rate (Troy Hill, Spring Garden, Brighton Heights, Summer Hill, Allegheny West, Perry North).
Poverty in Neighborhoods with Lower than Average Percentage of Black Population

Household Incomes in Neighborhoods with Higher than Average Percentage of Black Population
Some neighborhoods in the Northside have a high percentage of their adult population, 25 years old or older, **without high school or equivalent diplomas**. Marshall-Shadeland (38.4%) and Northview Heights (34.5%) both have more than a third of their population in this category. Education needs cut across racial lines with predominantly white neighborhoods like East Allegheny (33.1%) and Troy Hill (28.1%) also having high rates of adults without high school degrees. Adult and ongoing education is a priority in these neighborhoods to insure residents have basic knowledge and important job skills.

### Housing

One problem that is constant throughout the Northside is the lack of affordable housing for low-income residents. In all neighborhoods combined in the Northside there are 10,333 affordable owner-occupied units for low-income households, but only 474 of those are vacant. Many neighborhoods- Allegheny Center, Allegheny West, California-Kirkbride, Fineview, Manchester, Northview Heights and Summer Hill- have less than 10 vacant units that are affordable for low-income households seeking to own a home.

Throughout the whole Northside there are 9299 affordable rental units for low-income households, with 1146 of those vacant. There are some neighborhoods- California-Kirkbride, Fineview, Spring Garden, Spring Hill-City View, and Summer Hill- with 20 or less affordable rental units for low-income households.

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4 U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Housing, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy
Crime

This summer has seen a spike in violence in the Northside. There have already been multiple shootings there this year, including the senseless slayings of 18 year-olds, Jehru Donaldson and Trevor Greer.

It has long been a sad statistic in Pittsburgh that violent crime affects black residents out of proportion with their numbers. While about 27% of Pittsburgh is black, well over 80% of homicide victims between 2003 and 2005 were black.\(^5\)

The following charts show the difference in crime rates—homicide and aggravated assault—between Northside neighborhoods with higher than average black populations, and those with lower than average black populations.\(^6\)

**Chart 1: Homicides in Neighborhoods with Lower than Average Percentage of Black Population**

![Chart 1](image)

**Chart 2: Homicides in Neighborhoods with Higher than Average Percentage of Black Population**


Black Population

Chart 3: Aggravated Assaults in Neighborhoods with Lower than Average Percentage of Black Population

Chart 4: Aggravated Assaults in Neighborhoods with Higher than Average
Percentage of Black Population