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**BY THE NUMBERS**

using disaggregated data to inform policies, practices and decision-making



a race  
for results<sup>®</sup>  
CASE STUDY

## THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

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## BY THE NUMBERS

### Using disaggregated data to inform policies, practices and decision-making

#### Introduction

In 2014, the Annie E. Casey Foundation released a special KIDS COUNT policy report, *Race for Results – Building a Path to Opportunity for all Children*. That report provided a greater understanding of how race and ethnicity play a significant role in determining a child’s opportunity for success in life. It also introduced the Race for Results Index, which provides a single composite score to compare by race and by state how children are progressing on 12 key developmental milestones from birth to adulthood.

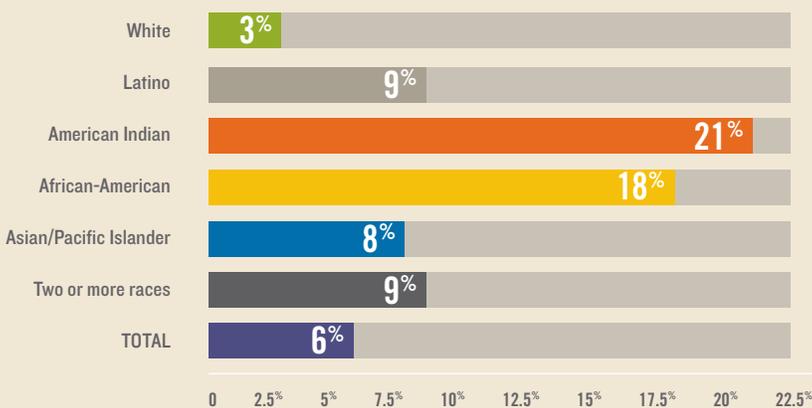
The data show that no racial group has all children meeting every developmental milestone. However, it is abundantly clear that African-American, American Indian and Latino children face

significant obstacles on the pathway to opportunity. To address these challenges, *Race for Results* proposed four sets of policy recommendations to help ensure that all children and their families participate, prosper and achieve their full potential in an inclusive economy. Those recommendations include: 1) gathering and analyzing racial and ethnic data to inform policies, practices, and decision-making; 2) using data and impact assessment tools to target investments that will yield the greatest benefit for children of color; 3) developing and implementing promising and evidence-based programs and practices focused on improving outcomes for children and youths of color; and 4) integrating economic inclusion strategies with economic and workforce development efforts. These recommendations are being lifted up by the Foundation in a series of case studies.

We began the case study series with; *It’s Time to Talk: How to Start Conversations About Racial Inequities*, a report which outlined strategies to bring leaders together for authentic conversations around race. *By The Numbers*, the second in the series, examines the importance of using disaggregated data on race and ethnicity to inform practice and policy. Since this data is often unavailable, we also describe how organizations can push for greater utilization and access to this critical information. The W. Haywood Burns Institute and the

#### CHILDREN IN EXTREME POVERTY (50 PERCENT POVERTY) BY RACE AND ETHNICITY: MINNESOTA 2013

Minnesota was ranked number one in the 2015 KIDS COUNT Data Book, which ranks states annually in child well-being. Looking at data on extreme poverty disaggregated by race reveals significant disparities for children of color, demonstrating why it is important not to mistake positive outcomes for some children as reflective of all children.



SOURCE: The KIDS COUNT Data Center, Minnesota 2013.



Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity are offered as examples of organizations that both advocate for and are innovators in the use of disaggregated data. Both the Burns and Kirwan Institutes' use of county and neighborhood data to unearth trends and disparities demonstrate why advocates should demand more and better-quality data collection, especially data on subsets of racial groups that may show striking differences in well-being.

The Foundation believes that the collection, analysis and use of race and ethnicity data should be an integral part of every organization's continuing improvement efforts, quality assurance, supervision and accountability processes. If used by all stakeholders serving children and families, the data can become an analytical tool to manage and efficiently allocate resources necessary to help children and their families thrive. The long-term economic health of this country depends on the future success of an increasing number of children of color. Efforts to strengthen access to and use of public data enable all sectors to act to achieve this goal.

### Case Study: W. Haywood Burns Institute

The Burns Institute, headquartered in Oakland, California, is named after civil rights pioneer W. Haywood Burns and was founded in 2001 by James Bell. The Burns Institute works to eliminate racial and ethnic disparity by building a community-centered response to youth offenses. This response is called the Racial Ethnic Disparities (RED) framework.

The Institute works with county justice officials and youth development organizations to help transform justice systems into a collaborative environment made up of community and system stakeholders that use data as an essential part of their strategy to reduce disparities.

Youth of color in this country comprise 38 percent of the youth population but make up nearly 70 percent of those confined. Research shows a young person with a history of detention is more likely to drop out of school and experience unemployment, arrest and incarceration as an adult. Bell says, "The disproportionate lockup of youth of color reflects ineffective policies and procedures in municipal juvenile justice

systems.” The Burns Institute takes a data-driven approach to help reduce those inequities.

“We look at data in a way it has never been considered before,” Bell said.

“Justice is administered at the county level and because there are more than 3,100 counties in this country, the best way to find out what is happening is to look at the data they gather.”

The Burns Institute has worked in 140 counties in Arizona, California, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio and Washington. When a county seeks the Institute’s help, RED experts help stakeholders analyze the extent of local disparities by disaggregating its justice system data by race, ethnicity, gender, geography and offense, or REGGO, as the Burns staff calls it.

Disaggregating data by REGGO helps dispel misconceptions about justice system decision-making. Collecting the most appropriate and accurate data, such as identifying penal code violations instead of using broad arrest categories, helps systems respond more efficiently.

Officials in Ventura County sought the Burns Institute’s technical assistance after it was awarded a Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) grant from the state in 2009. The U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention began requiring states to find ways to reduce the proportion of youth of color detained or confined in secure detention facilities or jail if their representation exceeded that of the general population. For instance, in 2009 and 2010 around 46 percent of youth in Ventura County were Latino. However, Latino youth accounted for nearly 70 percent of the admissions to juvenile detention.

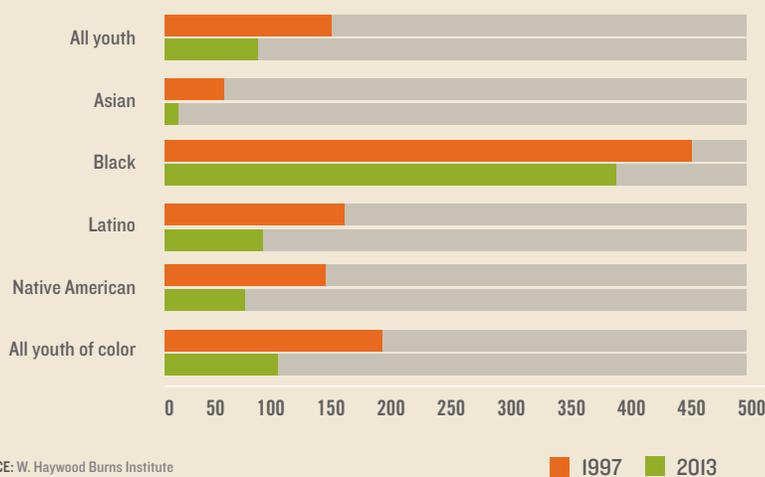
The Burns Institute met with stakeholders, including community agencies and county court, probation and law enforcement officials to determine the root causes of the disparities.

The data showed that warrant and probation violations were the primary offenses listed for juveniles detained in the county.

The Institute worked with stakeholders to dig deeper into these violations by first examining the racial/ethnic and gender breakdown of those youth being charged. The data analysis showed that Latino youth concentrated in just a handful of county zip codes accounted for nearly two-thirds of those arrested for violation of probation or for failing to show up for a court appearance.

The analysis spurred stakeholders to visit other jurisdictions to identify strategies to help youth prevent these kinds of violations. Based on what they learned, the Institute advised county leaders to create evening reporting centers for youth struggling to comply with court-ordered obligations.

A LOOK AT YOUTH DETENTION RATES (PER 1000 KIDS) IN CALIFORNIA DISAGGREGATED BY RACE



SOURCE: W. Haywood Burns Institute

County officials established a call notification program that used student workers to remind youth of scheduled court dates. Ventura County chief probation officer Mark Varela used the data collected to obtain additional grant funding to help turn Boys & Girls Clubs in communities with large Latino populations into evening reporting centers where nonviolent youth could receive tutoring and career development instead of being sent to a detention center. This collaboration ultimately led to a 53 percent reduction in admissions of Latinos into youth detention centers – and its lowest level of youth incarcerated – just three years later.

“It opened my eyes to a lot of things,” said John Doleman, a corrections officer in the county probation agency who sat on the DMC committee. “I was a booking officer for five years, and all it was ‘book, book, book.’ I see now there’s a reason they shouldn’t be detained.”

What the county learned from this engagement will extend far beyond the implementation of this community partnership. Burns Institute experts gave county agencies the ability to collect and extract REGGO data from its information systems. Going forward, system leaders will be able to analyze key data points to improve their practices and consider policy reforms. This disaggregated data also provides stakeholders the means to monitor the county’s progress.

“It is up to advocates and community leaders to push for the collection and reporting of accurate data,” Bell said. He describes the initial data gathering process as similar to a negotiation. Since no jurisdiction initially has a data system that can break down information according to REGGO, Burns associates

determine which part of REGGO, if any, is available.

The Institute encourages jurisdictions to report its findings at least quarterly, making it fresher data than what the FBI provides biannually. Bell said, “Any reform agenda should collect racially disaggregated data, investigate that data, then engage the system in finding solutions.”

“When leaders merely seek to maintain the status quo, they often claim, ‘I don’t know why we have so many (offenders); it’s a problem,’” Bell said. “If you never collect data, you’ll never know the specifics of the problem.”

Bell said the collection of better data in the past decade has improved the nation’s understanding of how the juvenile justice system treats different demographic groups of children. This can lead to better use of law enforcement resources and more reliance on proven holistic treatment approaches such as mental health counseling rather than anecdotes and preferences for detention sentences.

### Case Study: The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

The Kirwan Institute was established in May 2003 as an interdisciplinary social justice research organization housed at Ohio State University. Named for William E. “Brit” Kirwan, who championed diversity at Ohio State University, the Institute connects individuals and communities with opportunities they need to thrive and invests in efforts that support equity and inclusion.

The Kirwan Institute has distinguished itself through its work identifying

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communities that are disconnected from opportunity. Kirwan is a pioneer in combining local socio-economic data with geographical information system mapping software to illustrate critical assets, or lack thereof, in a neighborhood or region.

Research has shown that children and their families are more likely to thrive when they live in communities with strong social and cultural institutions and the resources to provide safety, good schools, and quality support services. As illuminated in the 2014 *Race for Results* policy report, African-American,

American Indian and Latino children are more likely to live in communities with higher poverty rates and, therefore, less access to health care, capital, fresh produce and living-wage employment.

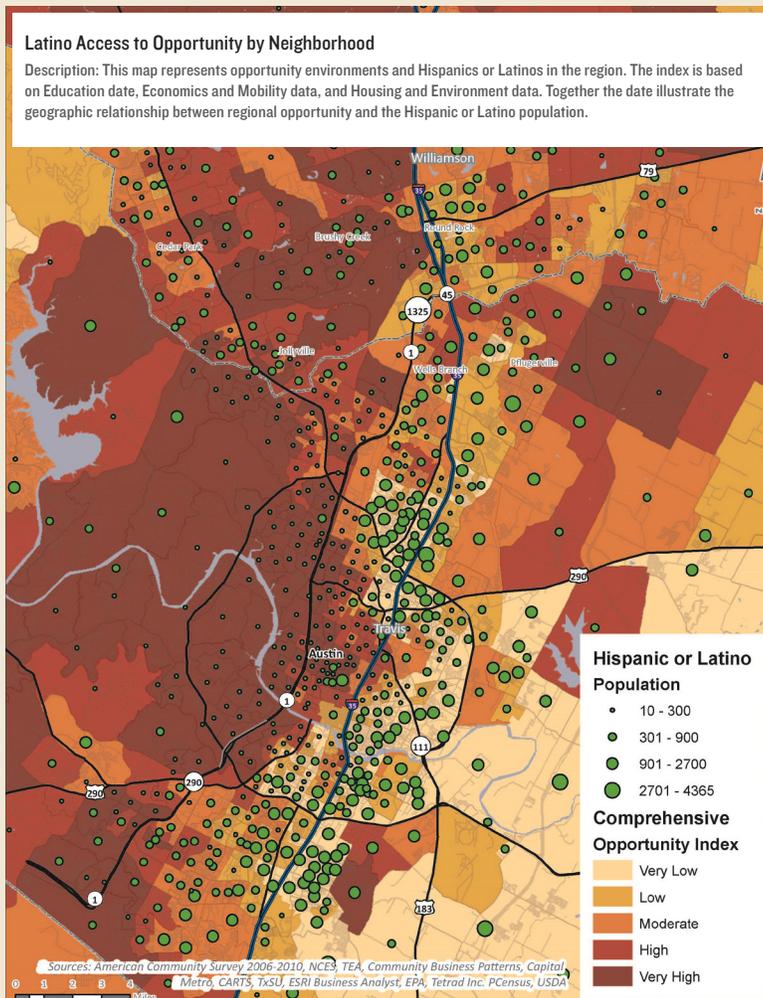
Kirwan's Opportunity Mapping process gathers and disaggregates data on education, health, housing, jobs, transportation and child care. Kirwan then overlays these indicators of opportunity onto maps. These maps put the challenges faced by marginalized populations into geographic perspective. This kind of data is invaluable for communities and the maps help illustrate that economic mobility rarely happens for children in low-income communities without targeted approaches.

“So much of what we do is focused on challenges some call ‘place and space disparities’,” said Jason Reece, senior associate director at Kirwan. “When you think spatially, mapping is the most efficient way to understand and convey information to others.”

The mapping shows planners and public leaders the radically different conditions in which people live, particularly people of color. It has helped to identify many factors that can limit or expand an individual's opportunity to be successful. Opportunity Mapping has sparked community dialogue and investments in regions ranging from Chicago to Cleveland to the Baltimore suburbs.

“We can use mapping both to inform but also to be informed by community engagement,” Reece said. “The visual impact of mapping can elicit strong reactions from a community, and can be used to inform decisions and investment.”

## POPULATION CHANGE IN AUSTIN



Map provided by the Kirwan Institute

Kirwan conducted its first Opportunity Mapping analysis in collaboration with Green Doors, (an affordable housing organization in Austin, Texas), as an influx of new, wealthier residents was underway in 2007. Over the ensuing years, mapping has enabled the city to see patterns that allow leaders to address gentrification and affordable housing and to observe other population trends resulting from the area's rapid growth.

At the time, East Austin was taking off. Wealthier residents, new homes and trendy businesses were springing up around older neighborhoods. The arrival of new residents and businesses was expected to improve long-standing community institutions. What came across in the data, however, was that the area's largely-Hispanic schools were not doing well at all.

"If people moved in, they disengaged and did not send their children to neighborhood schools," Reece said. Although the communities benefited in many other ways from the boom, their educational needs were not being met.

The city now has the opportunity to identify solutions to address this issue. A 20-year regional plan was developed for the area as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Sustainable Communities initiative and now seeks to address issues of gentrification and affordable housing identified in the data mapping analysis.

More recently, Kirwan deployed Opportunity Mapping to examine infant mortality rates in its backyard in Columbus, Ohio. When Kirwan and its partners in Franklin County published a research brief on its analysis in 2013, the findings alarmed local decision-makers.

"It's one thing to tell you Ohio has a high child mortality rate, but it's startling to learn it has the second-worst black child mortality rate (in the country)," Reece said.

The Opportunity Mapping analysis showed areas where no infant deaths had occurred in five years, while adjacent neighborhoods had high mortality rates similar to Central America.

"There are six or seven neighborhoods where nearly a quarter of our infant deaths occurred," Reece said.

A task force of two dozen public and private entities was formed, with mapping serving as an integral piece of the deeper investigation. A five-year effort was begun to introduce health care, housing, workforce and other interventions into neighborhoods where disparities were the greatest.

Sharon Davies, the Kirwan Institute's executive director, said there is no single road map to empowering communities and lifting them out of historical poverty. "Opportunity Mapping, however, allows leaders to look at the history and trajectory of a community and helps to provide a complete picture."

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other government agencies around the country now use elements of Opportunity Mapping. The federal agency uses the tool as part of its new Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing toolkit.

"Old problems have a new look to them, a different dynamic. No matter how right the economy, marginalized areas are disconnected. We need to work on addressing disparities in these places," Reece said.

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## Lessons Learned

**Push public agencies to collect more and better data on race and ethnicity.** Typically, public institutions and systems report data on whole populations as aggregates. Advocates and community leaders should push for these agencies to have greater access to racial data, especially subsets of different ethnicities such as Chinese and Korean instead of just Asian. Better collection and dissemination of this data helps local leaders understand trends and disparities more clearly while providing greater accountability in policymaking.

**Take advantage of existing resources and technology.** Opportunity Mapping uses current technology to visually identify resources and needs. Local stakeholders have improved their justice system decision-making by institutionalizing a process to regularly review existing data and to disaggregate it by race, ethnicity, gender, geography and offense (REGGO). The Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Center (Datacenter.kidscount.org) now includes 44 indicators of child well-being disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Advocates must embrace technology to connect communities to the resources they need.

**Target the right data.** Leaders at the Kirwan Institute caution that “perfect” data almost never exist at a neighborhood level. Stakeholders should collaborate to

find the most accurate sources of data available and choose data points that can track key decisions and policies along the entire continuum of a disparity and lead to better outcomes for the population they are trying to affect.

**Use disaggregated data to spur results and action.** Many organizations currently track data by race but either don't dig deeper and just admire the problem (what James Bell calls ‘adoration of the question’), or they dig and dig and still do nothing (navel gazing). The point of collecting and analyzing disaggregated data is to use data as a mirror and tool to uncover the drivers of disparity and inequity and increase opportunities and outcomes for all children.

**Include impacted communities in the data analysis for clearer interpretation.** Impacted communities of color bring knowledge and experience on factors that bureaucracies and service organizations may miss. As an example, the lack of transportation to travel long distances for court appearances can often lead to detention for youths. Community partners also bring fresh perspectives and questions to how systems do business, which can open the door to doing things differently and improving results. Often, impacted communities possess meaningful and efficient solutions to their community's challenges.



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