

# GEORGIA SYSTEMIC CHANGE ALLIANCE

## Albany Report by Reimagine Albany

September 2021







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Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice and belonging is having that voice be heard.



SUMMARY

What is the Georgia Systemic Change Alliance?

During the summer of 2020, in response to the COVID-19 crisis that deepened existing racial, social, and environmental disparities, The Sapelo Foundation launched a special two-year, \$800,000 grant initiative in Georgia. Through ongoing and new partnerships, The Sapelo Foundation, one statewide network based in Atlanta, and three local networks based in Savannah, Brunswick, and Albany, all united to launch the Georgia Systemic Change Alliance. Though each network was at a different stage in its lifecycle and had a unique history and vision, they were all bound by their commitments to make change, learn together, and advance three common goals for their communities:

- Recovering, rebuilding, and reimagining systems and policies post-COVID.
- Advancing the movement for black lives and broader racial justice across systems and policies.
- Building internal muscle and infrastructure of networks for the short-term and long-term.

Together, the four place-based networks included more than 100 social, environmental, and racial justice organizations across the state of Georgia. They also included leaders of faith, government, and business.

- **Albany Network** – “Reimagine Albany” – is a nonprofit network led by the United Way of Southwest Georgia.
- **Brunswick Network** – “Community First Planning Commission” – is faith-based network by a long-standing collaboration of 18 black churches and allies called Community First. They have been convening for over a decade and deepened their efforts in the wake of the murder of Mr. Ahmaud Arbery.
- **Savannah Network** – “Racial Equity and Leadership [REAL] Task Force” – is a public-private partnership led by the Mayor’s Office. During the summer of 2020, Savannah Mayor, Van Johnson, announced the Task Force and appointed former Savannah Mayor, Dr. Otis Johnson, as chair.
- **Statewide Network** – “Just Georgia Coalition” – is an advocacy network led by the NAACP of Georgia and includes formal partnerships with Black Voters Matter, New Georgia Project, Southern Center for Human Rights, Working Families, Malcom X Grassroots Movement, and Black Male Voter Project.

In year one, concluding in summer 2021, all networks would complete a year of planning. Specifically, each of the three local networks would complete a Network Report, with recommendations for their given community. Additionally, all four networks would complete an Alliance Case Study about the work behind the scenes during a critical year with unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In year two, starting in summer 2021, all networks would implement their plans. Together, the four networks and The Sapelo Foundation collectively selected Georgia-based Partnership for Southern Equity (PSE) to manage and coordinate activities, provide technical assistance, and help write the local Network Reports and Alliance Cases Study.

The purpose of this report is twofold

1. To provide a living document for the Reimagine Albany citywide network, co-lead by and housed at the United Way of Southwest Georgia.
2. To share specific systemic policy change recommendations for Albany that address racial justice and that were developed by a Reimagine Albany, a network comprised of the community. Reimagine Albany also provided historical and socioeconomic context for its work, followed by analysis focused on its core issues that are in early stages of development. As the technical assistance provider selected by all networks in the Georgia Systemic Change Alliance, PSE helped Reimagine Albany clarify its priorities, goals and strategies, as well as tell its story with resonance.

Additionally, the committee has set the following overarching goals for the remainder of 2021:

- Complete core issue analyses to make final recommendations to the City of Albany.
- Address the ways in which the network’s core issues were exacerbated by COVID.
- Convene key leaders to garner commitments for moving forward.
- Build the trust that is needed in the greater Albany community to advance issues of racial equity.
- Provide opportunities for community groups, nonprofits and government agencies to learn about systems transformation.
- Create and publish an annual report based on qualitative insights and quantitative data on how Albany is progressing in key racial disparities.

What is Reimagine Albany?

Reimagine Albany is a new network convened on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic by the United Way of Southwest Georgia, which has traditionally focused on supporting direct services in education, health, and financial stability (though always using a racial equity lens). The United Way of Southwest Georgia also serves as a convener and coordinator for the region beyond those service areas. Currently, Reimagine Albany is structured as a planning committee of three community leaders who play a critical role in improving Albany’s racial inequities. The United Way had been in deep conversation with the Southwest Georgia Project, a trailblazing regional racial justice organization with origins in the Civil Rights Movement, for a long time prior to forming Reimagine Albany.

In 2020, Albany was among the hardest hit cities in the nation by the COVID pandemic. The urgency of that moment combined with America’s racial injustices which also came to a head in 2020 forged a formal network with the assertion that even at a local level, such large-scale societal crises can only be addressed through collective understanding and coordination for collective impact, and that such a collective effort must be planned by grassroots leaders from groups like Southwest Georgia Project and 9to5 Georgia who are already organizing Albany communities around issues of racial justice.

Reimagine Albany’s vision is to better support and coordinate the efforts of local grassroots organizations, faith groups, funders, direct service providers, elected officials and other decision-makers in Albany for greater impact. United Way of Southwest Georgia recruited a small group of local racial equity champions across sectors to strategically align time, talent, and resources for this purpose.

“Our desire to move forward and do something to help can be paralyzed by too many options or not knowing where to start.

The Coronavirus pandemic, together with the recent incidents of social injustice bring into sharp focus how racism manifests itself in the daily lives of black and brown communities. No single leader, corporation or organization has all the explanations, ideas, or solutions.

Our community needs people of all ages, ethnicities, and sectors to clear the path for learning, listening, getting involved and taking action together. We’re excited to launch this effort and look forward to REIMAGINING equity together.”

Shaunae Motley, President & CEO,  
United Way of Southwest Georgia





## Reimagine Albany's Planning Committee

Shaunae Motley- President, United Way of Southwest Georgia

Ashley Williams- Special Projects Manager, United Way of Southwest Georgia

Amna Farooqi- Community Organizer, 9to5 Georgia

Darrell Sabbs- Community Benefits Coordinator, Phoebe Putney Health System

### Established Partnerships

As the committee planned the development of Reimagine Albany, some partnerships were already set in motion:

- A relationship with Emory Prevention Initiative resulted in plans for a racial equity training for Albany residents and plans to send a cohort to the Midwest Academy, a national racial justice training institute.
- A relationship with SOWEGA Rising, a local racial justice group, resulted in the organization committing to working on health equity issues and hiring an advisor for this work.
- A relationship with the Albany Museum of Art and Reimagine Albany may result in a pass-through grant from The Sapelo Foundation to support its Courageous Conversations on Race programming.



## BACKGROUND

### Historical Context

Importantly, the first local racial equity movement that gained national media coverage in the US was in Albany, Georgia. The Albany Movement of 1961 aimed to spark and unite an entire community during the Civil Rights Era. This local movement was built by a desegregation and voting rights coalition led by ministers, local Black leaders, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), with hopes of ending all segregation throughout the city. The protest lasted for a year with multiple arrests and protests occurring on an ongoing basis. For years, Albany's leadership suppressed African American participation in the democratic process. The first attempt at desegregation was in travel facilities which grew into a larger agenda to desegregate all public amenities. In December of 1961, Dr. King led a protest, as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) temporarily joined the movement, attracting national attention. By the end of the year, hundreds including Dr. King and Reverend Ralph Abernathy had been jailed in peaceful demonstrations, which led to negotiations with the city government. City leaders promised to comply with the new federal Interstate Commerce Commission ban on segregation and release all protestors if Dr. King left the city. However, after Dr. King left Albany, the city failed to uphold its agreement. Despite this early failure, Dr. King came back to Albany and was arrested two more times. These experiences informed the Birmingham Campaign that followed less than a year later. In March 1963, the city of Albany removed all citywide segregation ordinances from its books.<sup>1</sup>

Though legal segregation ended relatively early in Albany compared to other places in the South, attitudes about race have been harder to change. In 1961, through his work with SNCC, Charles Sherrod originally came to Albany. By 1985, as a City Council member he said, "The attitudes are still there. They won't do anything they can't get away with."<sup>2</sup> The city's white establishment controlled economic opportunities well into the 1990's. So, many Black Albany residents, who had already lived most of their lives under segregation, did not want to "rock the boat." As the status quo persisted, Albany ranked among the highest for rates of concentrated poverty in the nation. As recently as 2009, Forbes Magazine ranked Albany the fourth poorest city in America, attributed to a dearth of employment opportunities.<sup>3</sup> Today, 38.2% of residents in Albany lives in poverty, the highest rate in Georgia. The city's overall economic state is a determinant of its racial disparities, as most of its poverty is concentrated in 9 of 43 neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup> These neighborhoods are predominantly occupied by people of color and are also the epicenter of poor quality of life outcomes and opportunity. Under such extreme circumstances of segregation and concentrated poverty, COVID-19 pandemic devastated Albany's population with one the highest death rates in the world.<sup>5</sup> In addition to COVID-19, South Georgia has been affected by several environmental disasters, from massive floods in the 1990s, to destructive hurricanes and tornadoes in the last few years.

Reimagine Albany is the first citywide effort of its kind in Albany, and it is a testament to the resilience of the people of Albany. It formed in October 2020, in direct response to the pandemic's tight grip on the city, and more specifically, to the entrenched inequities the pandemic exposed. Reimagine Albany was inspired by individuals, such as City Commissioner Demetrius Young. It was also inspired by institutions, such as SOWEGA Rising and churches like Mount Zion Church. These local civic and faith-based institutions share in the city's rich civil rights legacy and have built popular support for racial equity reforms. They made way for a regional and mainstream institution – like United Way of Southwest Georgia – to help play a convener role, bringing all essential stakeholders together to make big plays, shifting local attitudes and decisions toward change.







**Shaunae Motley, United Way of Southwest Georgia**

As President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Southwest Georgia, Shaunae Motley leads the effort to strengthen communities and make a difference in the lives of neighbors across 13 counties in the southwest Georgia region. She is a nationally recognized leader who brings a wealth of experience in visioning, strategic planning, community engagement, and capacity building with a variety of organizations and communities. Prior to joining United Way, Shaunae served as Director of Programs of Quest For Change, where she developed leadership that transformed the organization from two employees serving 150 students, to a staff of 12 employees serving over 1,300 youth and families annually. Before that role, Shaunae had been Chief Operating Officer for Future Foundation, where she helped grow the once grassroots organization from a fledging entity to a multi-million dollar, nationally recognized nonprofit. In total, she has nearly 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. A recent graduate of GeorgiaForward’s 2018 Young Gamechangers class in Albany/Dougherty County, Ms. Motley studied Public Relations at Georgia Southern University and holds a graduate certificate in Business Excellence from Columbia University Business School in New York. She was recognized as a 2019 American Express NGen Fellow, Rural Leader Magazine’s Top Four “40 Under 40” and has earned several other awards and recognition for her leadership in the nonprofit industry.



**Ashley Williams, Special Programs Manager, United Way of Southwest Georgia**

Ashley Williams has ten years of experience working as a youth advocate and currently supports several community-facing initiatives as Special Programs Manager at the United Way. Ashley’s areas of expertise include facilitation of trainings that foster healthy relationships and in trauma-informed care. Her work has led her to inform and educate families across Georgia. Ashley has a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Columbus State University and another Bachelor’s in business administration from Georgia Southwestern University. She holds a Master of Education in school counseling from Albany State University.



**Darrell Sabbs, Community Benefits Manager, Phoebe Putney Health System**

As Community Benefits Manager, Darrell Sabbs implements strategies aimed at improving the community health, with a focus on the underserved. He works closely with the hospital’s Network of Trust, a national award-winning in-school, interactive outreach program for pregnant and parenting teens in rural Southwest Georgia. Mr. Sabbs also works with Quest for Change Successful Life Initiative to engage community stakeholders, parents, educators and providers in a healthy youth development project. Sabbs played a key role in developing health initiatives for “Men on the Move,” a faith-based partnership of more than 30 faith-based institutions designed to help Southwest Georgia men. His work with both underserved men and women led to the creation of two of Phoebe Putney’s most successful health events- a Women’s Health Fair and a Men’s Health Fair, held annually. In large part of Sabbs’ commitment, Phoebe Putney was awarded the coveted Foster McGaw Prize for excellence in community service. He also serves as a consultant to the Morehouse School of Medicine and the Morehouse Research Institute.

Recent Accomplishments

*Reimagine Albany has positioned itself to grow the network through the following efforts:*

- Attracted experienced organizers to the table.
- Sponsored the Albany Jack and Jill chapter’s Black History Youth Conference.
- Participated in the Albany Museum of Art’s Courageous Conversations on Race.
- Influenced Emory Prevention Initiative to organize a racial equity training.
- Influenced SOWEGA Rising, a social justice movement, to move into the health equity space.
- Made a televised presentation from Shaunae Motley to the Dougherty County Commission about Reimagine Albany’s work, which garnered the interest of new prospective funders.
- Secured external funding, including the Georgia Funders Network, Georgia Grantmakers Alliance, and Health Care Georgia Foundation.
- Identified opportunities to collaborate with other equity efforts around the state.

Key Learnings

*The following takeaways were gleaned from post-planning exit interviews with Reimagine Albany members:*

- Because United Way is often thought of as a funder of direct services, some stakeholders in Albany are unsure about the Reimagine Albany network as a thought leader in the advocacy space. Building trust and framing Reimagine Albany as a grass-tops advocacy-oriented body will be critical to the network’s success.
- The pandemic forced Reimagine Albany to operate virtually, making it more difficult to build trust with the community. Virtual meetings also made it difficult for Partnership for Southern Equity’s exercises to gain traction.
- The exacerbating effect of COVID-19 on the city’s existing disparities was a recurring theme of discussions that will need to be fully examined and integrated into the network’s work plan.
- United Way successfully attracted participants with a strong command of community needs and assets to the table which made for productive discussions.
- Participation fluctuated among participants, which affected the amount of work the committee could complete.
- Partnership for Southern Equity offered its standard Racial Equity 101 for Reimagine Albany. However, some Reimagine Albany members were more advanced in their understanding and thus would have benefitted from more advanced training.
- All Reimagine Albany participants did not share the same fundamental beliefs about whether addressing structural racism is essential for improving racially disparate conditions in Albany, making it more difficult to form guiding principles to build upon.
- The progressive community is relatively small in Albany and Reimagine Albany commenced during highly charged national and state elections, making it harder for the network to generate buy-in from residents who would otherwise be frontline participants. Conversely, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement gave Reimagine Albany a boost of public support in a short period of time.





Vision Statement

Despite the network’s challenges related to disparate beliefs about racism in Albany, Reimagine Albany Leadership’s steering committee developed a cohesive vision for its work:

The Reimagine Albany will help to realize the beloved community, a place where the color of one’s skin does not determine their life outcomes, by transforming systems and people through courageous engagement and policy change. The Alliance will focus on social determinants, influencing change at the state and local level.

ISSUES

Reimagine Albany established its scope of work by identifying priority issues through its racial equity efforts. Committees were then formed by issue area. Each committee developed an analysis of the core problems. It also provided recommendations for effective and feasible public policy interventions to reach solutions, complete with goals, metrics, and a timeframe of three years.

Reimagine Albany organized three issue-focused committees: housing, education, and health.

It is worth noting that several Reimagine Albany members had a strong rapport with one another and a common understanding of the issues of focus. So, at the committee level, less time was spent on research compared to other Georgia Systemic Change Alliance networks. Each committee quickly determined what it could reasonably accomplish in the first few years that would strengthen existing work in Albany.

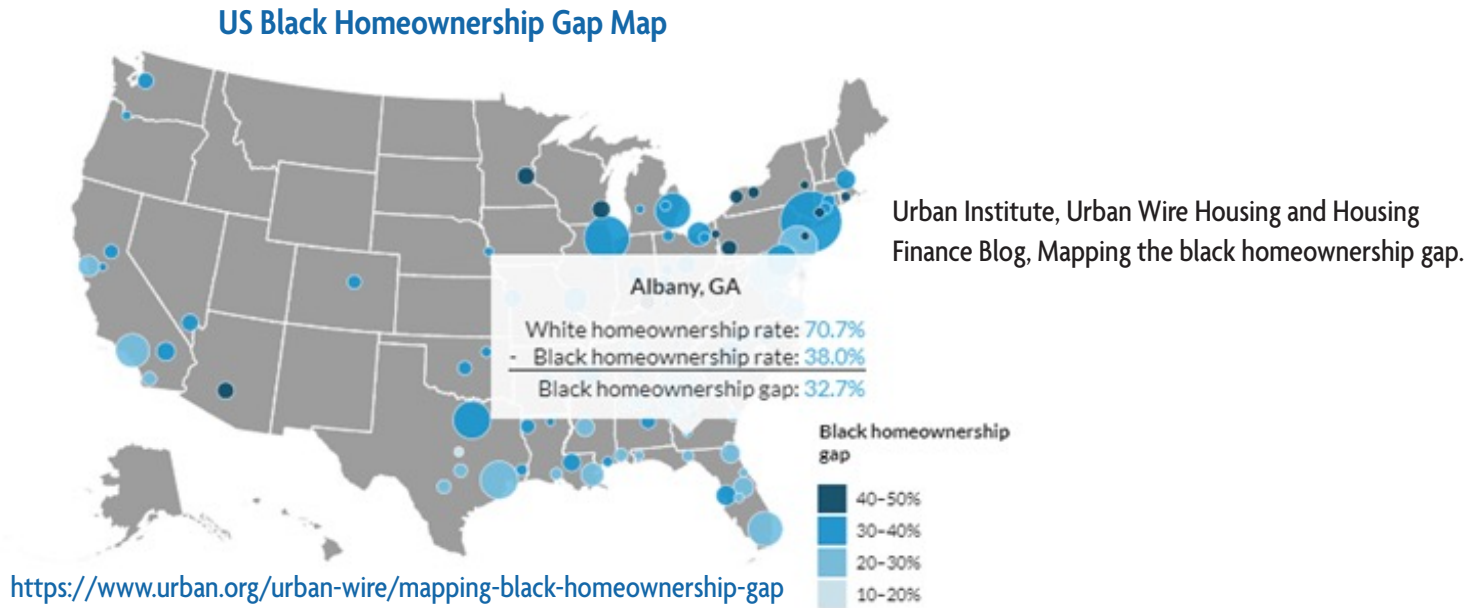
*The following demographic data on the City of Albany provides framing for Reimagine Albany’s work in all issues:*

- Albany has a population of 69,952, down from 73,478 in 2019.<sup>6</sup>
- Albany’s population is 74.3% Black, 22.1% white, 2.2% Latino, .9% Asian and .3% Native American.<sup>7</sup>
- Only 40% of housing units are owner-occupied.<sup>8</sup>
- 27% of households do not have internet access.<sup>9</sup>
- Only 20% of Albany residents have a bachelor’s degree.<sup>10</sup>
- 19.5% of residents under 65 do not have health insurance.<sup>11</sup>
- The median household income is \$36,615.<sup>12</sup>
- The median rent in 2019 was \$744.<sup>13</sup>
- Over 30% of the population is living in poverty.<sup>14</sup>
- As of 2018, Albany had the highest population loss in Georgia.<sup>15</sup>
- An October 2020 study showed that of the ten counties in the nation with the highest death rates from COVID-19, five were in Georgia, and one was Dougherty County, where Albany is located.<sup>16</sup>



Housing Committee

Like its peer cities, Albany is in a housing crisis, driven by large gaps between white and Black homeownership, rental affordability, and evictions. Currently, 60% of Albany residents are renters, the vast majority of whom are Black. Additionally, 53% of those renters reside in substandard housing and have a significantly higher energy burden than their white counterparts.<sup>17</sup>



*The following additional data bears evidence to Albany’s housing disparities and structural barriers:*

- Only 11% of Albany’s housing stock was built after 2000.<sup>18</sup>
- 64% of renters in Albany are people of color, 34% are white.<sup>19</sup>
- 64% of the housing stock is at an elevated risk for lead hazard exposure.<sup>20</sup>
- 67% of renters spend more than a third of their income on housing and home energy costs.<sup>21</sup>
- 38% of renters spend more than half of their income on housing and energy costs.<sup>22</sup>
- 68% of African American, 93% of Latino and 56% of white households in Albany have at least one housing problem, defined as any impediment to fair housing choice by the City of Albany’s Department of Community and Economic Development. 27% of white households have a “severe” housing problem, compared to 39% of African American, 54% of Asian, 46% of Native American and 58% of Latino households.<sup>23</sup>

*The committee identified the following drivers of disparities in home energy cost burdens in Albany:*

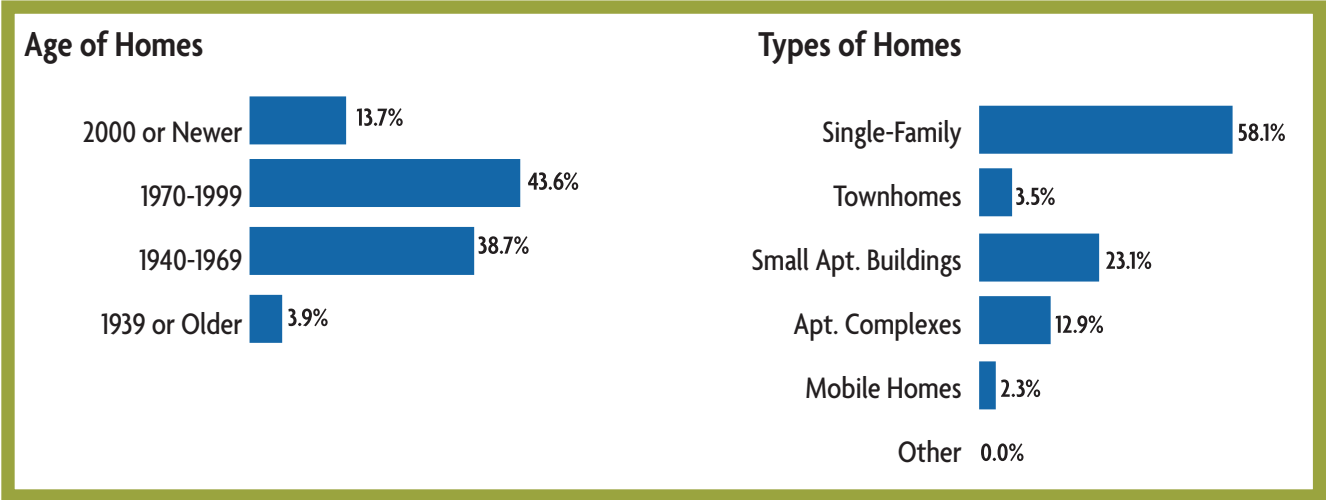
- Albany has a large stock of aging homes, and there are disproportionately more people of color living in these aging energy inefficient homes. These issues are derived from the personal/professional knowledge of the steering committee.
- People of color spend a higher portion of their income on home energy costs than white residents, and Albany’s residents of color have lower incomes on average than white residents.
- Historically, African American neighborhoods have not received infrastructure investments on par with majority-white neighborhoods, which has put these communities at greater risk of experiencing extreme forms of climate change, like flooding.
- Communities of color also lack access to green infrastructure, preventative healthcare, healthy food, and home energy efficiencies to adapt to steadily increasing global temperatures.

*Justice that is not rooted in equity, in social welfare, and in community is not justice at all.*  
– DeRay Mckesson



Reimagine Albany’s housing committee further explored the structural causes of disparities in home energy burdens. The issue came to a head in 2019, when many residents noticed an increase in their utility bill, even though they were not consuming more energy. For some, monthly utility bills surpassed the cost of rent. A petition from hundreds of Albany Utility (owned by Georgia Power) customers circulated on social media. Georgia Power responded with a generic explanation, pointing to higher temperatures that lead residents to increase air conditioning usage. Then, Albany Utility pointed to its differential rates between the winter and summer, rates set by the state’s Public Service Commission. All authorities also referenced home energy inefficiency as a major contributing factor. Indeed, a major driver of the rate hike is not only the source of energy, but also the quality of housing. Most of Albany’s housing stock, especially in South and East Albany, was built before 1980. A significant portion is aged-out and blighted, and many rental properties are owned by “slumlords,” who have little incentive to invest in even basic energy efficiency upgrades.

Albany Real Estate Appreciation and Housing Market Trends



Neighbor Scout, Albany, GA Real Estate Appreciation and Housing Market Trends, Housing Market Details.  
<https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ga/albany/real-estate>

In response, local advocacy groups – including 9to5 Georgia and SOWEGA (Southwest Georgia) Rising – formed the Albany Coalition to Lower Utilities Bills (ACLUB). It connected residents, faith leaders and civic leaders to the utility crisis. Due to little media coverage or public education on this issue, the ACLUB focuses on the strategy of public messaging on social media and in public forums. It frames utilities and home inefficiency as a matter of racial justice and climate justice. As a result of these grassroots effort, public awareness in Albany and across the Southwest Georgia region has increased. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Albany Utility imposed a moratorium on electricity service disruption and reached an agreement with public officials to allocate \$2 million to housing efficiency and clean energy needs in Albany.<sup>24</sup> Reimagine Albany’s steering committee members believe that the costs of remediating the city’s energy cost burdens far exceed the budget offered by public officials. A parallel effort to ACLUB, the Election Protection Coalition of Albany coordinated the “Get Out the Vote” campaign for the Public Service Commission elections of 2020. This served as a critical strategy to ease home energy burdens, because the Public Service Commission sets the state’s utility rates. As a result of this campaign, a record number of informed Albany residents voted in the 2020 election. These are resounding achievements, given the region’s and state’s long history of resisting reforms in the utility system and suppressing voters.

The collective efforts of grassroots groups are also gaining traction with the city government. In February 2021, the Energy Conservation Loan Program, an initiative of the City of Albany, launched.<sup>25</sup> It will provide loans to both homeowners and landlords to mitigate some of the causes of energy inefficiency in the home.

*The housing committee set the following goals for Reimagine Albany to accomplish in the next three years:*

Year 1 Goals

- Develop/ strengthen the Residency Bill of Rights and support local efforts to educate renters about their rights.
- Form a partnership with the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity to increase the stock of energy efficient homes affordable for low-and-moderate income households.
- Raise awareness of disparate home energy cost burdens between white households and people of color households.
- Support the development of additional financial support from the City of Albany and Dougherty County to offset energy burdens for impacted residents living in substandard housing.
- Identify partners to pilot a sustainable energy efficiency rehab model to provide home rehab interventions that are accessible and affordable to both the tenant and the homeowner.

Year 3 Goals

- Develop a “slumlord registry” that will prompt federal level intervention.
- Advocate for firmer code enforcement from the state, to force local agencies to comply with existing protections for tenants.

Education Committee

Black youth comprise the majority of public-school students in Albany. Yet, they have the lowest high school graduation rate at 81% (compared to 88% for white students) and the lowest college attainment rate at 16% (compared to 31% for white students).<sup>26</sup>

*Reimagine Albany’s education committee identified drivers of racial disparities in its local education market:*

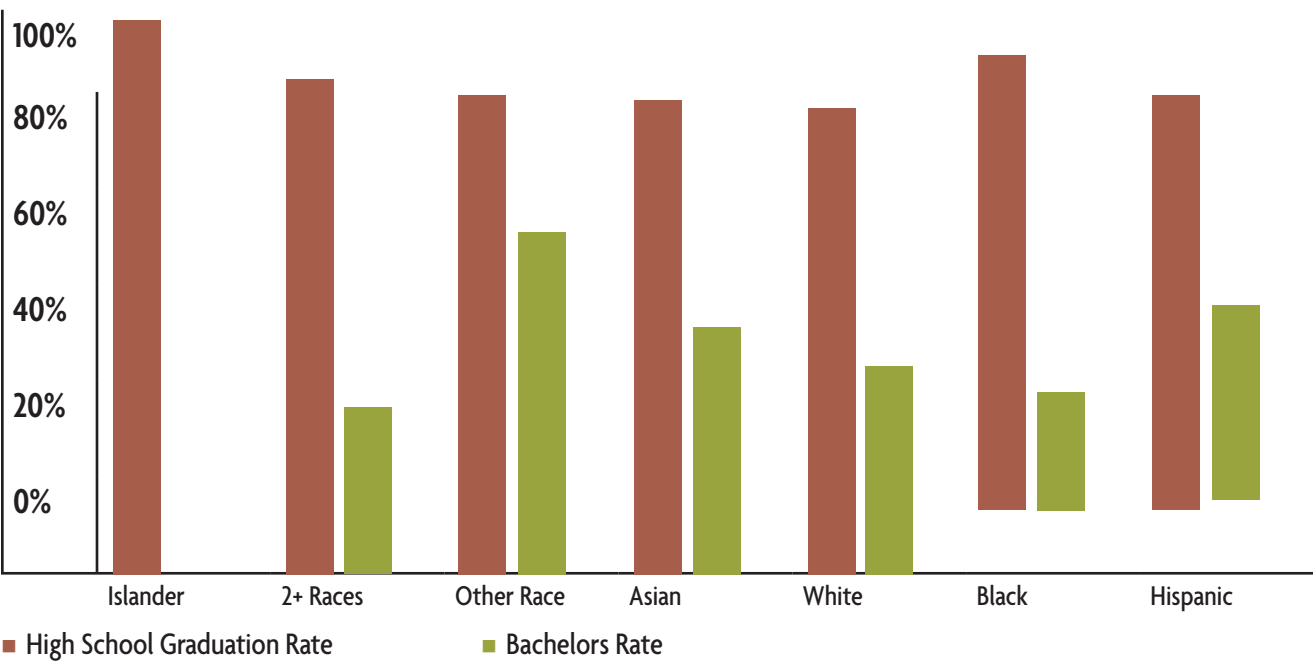
- Albany does not have adequate quality early childhood education. According to Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, there are 213 registered early learning centers in Albany, but only 12 received the top rating by the state agency; all of them are privately owned and likely unaffordable for low-and-moderate income families. An additional 33 received second top rating and eight of those are state- funded while the rest are privately owned.<sup>27</sup>
- Low-income students tend to experience relatively more trauma, and schools are not equipped to provide extensive psychological support.<sup>28</sup>
- Trauma-induced behavior is often misinterpreted by teachers and leads to disproportionately more disciplinary action for Black students of all ages.<sup>29</sup>





Albany High School and Bachelors Graduation Rate Comparison by Race

Data on Albany’s Racial Education Gap



Albany High School and Bachelors Graduation Numbers by Race

Race	Total	High School	Bachelors
Black	32,318	26,204	5,031
White	312,144	10,606	3,742
Hispanic	724	477	185
Asian	446	395	152
2+ Races	377	345	75
Other Race	286	254	164
Native American	187	157	41
Islander	26	26	



Policy/Systems Change Recommendations

Year 1 Goals

- Identify youth empowerment programs in Albany to scale up through funding, to supplement the schooling of youth of color in Albany.
- Host a cross-sector forum that brings together employers, grant makers and community leaders to devise a mutual recruitment plan that reflects local workforce assets and needs.

Year 3 Goals

- Produce a trauma-informed and trauma-responsive plan for supporting youth who exhibit behavior indicative of trauma in schools, to be shared with the Dougherty County School System.
- Host a citywide parent engagement summit in partnership with other organizations to increase parental involvement in schools, specifically for students of color.

Health Committee

Reimage Albany’s health committee devised strategies to eliminate racial health disparities in Albany.

The committee is developing its analysis from the following problem statement

In Albany, low-income women of color are more likely to experience maternity mortality and their babies are more likely to experience low birth weight than their white counterparts.

The following additional data bears evidence to Albany’s health disparities

- Georgia Department of Public Health Office of Health Indicators for Planning data shows that the Southwest Public Health District, a 14-county area that includes Albany, had 482 incidents of low birth weight in 2015, a slight decrease from 528 in 2014. Dougherty County ranks third highest of 152 counties in Georgia. Low birth weight is associated with worse health outcomes like asthma, high blood pressure and compromised cognitive development over the entire life course.<sup>30</sup>
- African American children in southwest Georgia are 150% times more likely to be born to an unmarried parent- many to women under age 30, which is also 30% more than the national average. Children growing up in single-parent families typically do not have the same economic or human resources available as those growing up in two-parent families. Compared with children in married-couple families, children raised in single-parent households are more likely to drop out of school, to have or cause a teen pregnancy and to experience a divorce in adulthood. In Albany, 58% of Black children and 36% of Latino children are living with an unmarried parent compared to 24% of white children and 13% of Asian children.<sup>31</sup>
- There were 1,163 emergency room visits in the region in 2015 due to diabetes, a slight decrease from 1,342 in 2014.<sup>32</sup>

The committee lifted up the following additional factors in exploring racial health disparities in Albany

- Many African Americans suffer from Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS), a term coined by internationally renowned researcher Joy DeGruy, PhD, to describe the multigenerational trauma and injustices experienced by African Americans - from the dawn of slavery to the recent deaths of Black citizens at the hands of police.<sup>33</sup>
- Because there are so many social determinants of health, conventional policy-level interventions will not close these disparities, and thus we must utilize long-term systems change strategies that are often more difficult for many people to grasp.





NEXT STEPS

Reimagine Albany has not finalized its work plan, but is considering the following interventions:

- Mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training for all employees of the local nonprofit and public sectors.
- Community education programming on systems transformation, public policy, and advocacy.
- “Reimagine Albany Days” in local government for community members to meet with elected officials on racial equity issues.
- Adopt the Georgia Partnership for Education model and publish a top-ten public policy agenda, accompanied with an editorial in a local news publication annually.
- Develop a shared accountability online dashboard that measures impact, defines what success looks like, and convenes community stakeholders around innovation and data.
- Create an annual report providing current data on how Albany is progressing on racial equity measures.

Partnerships to cultivate:

- State Senator Simms is interested in Reimagine Albany’s work, she will be instrumental in facilitating policy change at the local level.
- Marion Fredrick, President of Albany State University, who also serves on a health equity statewide board, will be a valuable partner to Reimagine Albany’s health equity work.

For the remainder of 2021, Reimagine Albany has committed to:

- Submitting a report of final recommendations.
- Completing issue area analyses to make final recommendations to the City of Albany.
- Analyzing and documenting the impact of COVID-19 on the network’s core issues.
- Convening key leaders and securing time-bound commitments to action and to resources for implementation of final recommendations that flow from the committee’s final work plan.
- Building trust in the greater Albany community to advance issues of racial equity on an ongoing basis.
- Educating community groups, nonprofits and government agencies on systems transformation.
- Securing resources for the production of an annual report of qualitative insights and quantitative data on how Albany is progressing in key racial disparities.





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<sup>17</sup><https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/albanycitygeorgia/INC110219>, <https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/2019-08/fintridgedrms.pdf>

<sup>18</sup><https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/ga/albany/real-estate>

<sup>19</sup><https://www.albanyga.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/9493/637534921633600000>

<sup>20</sup><https://www.albanyga.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/2087/636530143923130000>

<sup>21</sup><https://www.deptofnumbers.com/rent/georgia/albany/>

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<sup>24</sup>[https://www.albanyherald.com/local/albany-utilities-suspends-customer-disconnections/article\\_64277e84-6a0c-11ea-af0d-fbfe7ad25ed3.html](https://www.albanyherald.com/local/albany-utilities-suspends-customer-disconnections/article_64277e84-6a0c-11ea-af0d-fbfe7ad25ed3.html)

<sup>25</sup><https://www.walb.com/2021/02/08/albany-organization-opens-applications-second-utility-justice-fellowship-program/>

<sup>26</sup><https://apnews.com/article/race-and-ethnicity-georgia-graduation-1049e4d3d917b192ad96aefe24e0858f>

<sup>27</sup><https://families.decal.ga.gov/childcare/qualityrated>

<sup>28</sup><https://www.epi.org/publication/toxic-stress-and-childrens-outcomes-african-american-children-growing-up-poor-are-at-greater-risk-of-disrupted-physiological-functioning-and-depressed-academic-achievement/>

<sup>29</sup><https://traumasensitiveschools.org/trauma-and-learning/the-problem-impact/>

<sup>30</sup>[https://www.albanyherald.com/coalitions-take-aim-at-diabetes-birth-weights/article\\_f95726b3-645c-5302-b00c-b2c4a93651db.html](https://www.albanyherald.com/coalitions-take-aim-at-diabetes-birth-weights/article_f95726b3-645c-5302-b00c-b2c4a93651db.html)

<sup>31</sup><https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/?date=19950110&slug=2098737>

<sup>32</sup>[https://www.albanyherald.com/coalitions-take-aim-at-diabetes-birth-weights/article\\_f95726b3-645c-5302-b00c-b2c4a93651db.html](https://www.albanyherald.com/coalitions-take-aim-at-diabetes-birth-weights/article_f95726b3-645c-5302-b00c-b2c4a93651db.html)

<sup>33</sup><https://www.sharp.com/health-news/understanding-post-traumatic-slave-syndrome.cfm>



Additional information about Reimagine Albany and the Georgia Systems Change Alliance can be found here:

<https://psequity.org/sapelo-foundation-selects-pse-to-manage-georgia-systemic-change-alliance/>

<https://givingcompass.org/article/georgia-systemic-change-alliance-southwest-georgia/>





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