



United Way of Greater Atlanta

**Protip Biswas, VP
Homelessness & Place Based
Initiatives**

Equity - A situation where all groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate gaps and improve the quality of their lives. [L]
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Racial Equity - “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for all. Equity is distinct from equality in that it aspires to achieve fair outcomes and considers history and implicit bias, rather than simply providing “equal opportunity” for everyone. Racial equity is not just the absence of overt racial discrimination; it is also the presence of deliberate policies and practices that provide everyone with the support they need to improve the quality of their lives.”



Background

In September 2016, the Center for Social Innovation launched SPARC (Supporting Partnerships for AntiRacist Communities) to understand and respond to racial inequities in homelessness. Through research and action in six communities, SPARC has begun a national conversation about racial equity in the homelessness sector.

Those communities included:

- Atlanta, GA
- Columbus, OH
- Dallas, TX
- San Francisco, CA
- Syracuse, NY
- Pierce County, WA

In Atlanta Blacks comprise 53.5% of the Atlanta population and 75.7% of those living in poverty and account for more than 87% of those experiencing homelessness. On the other hand, Whites constitute 40.1% of the general population, but are markedly underrepresented in the deep poverty group (17.6%) and the population experiencing homelessness (11.3%).

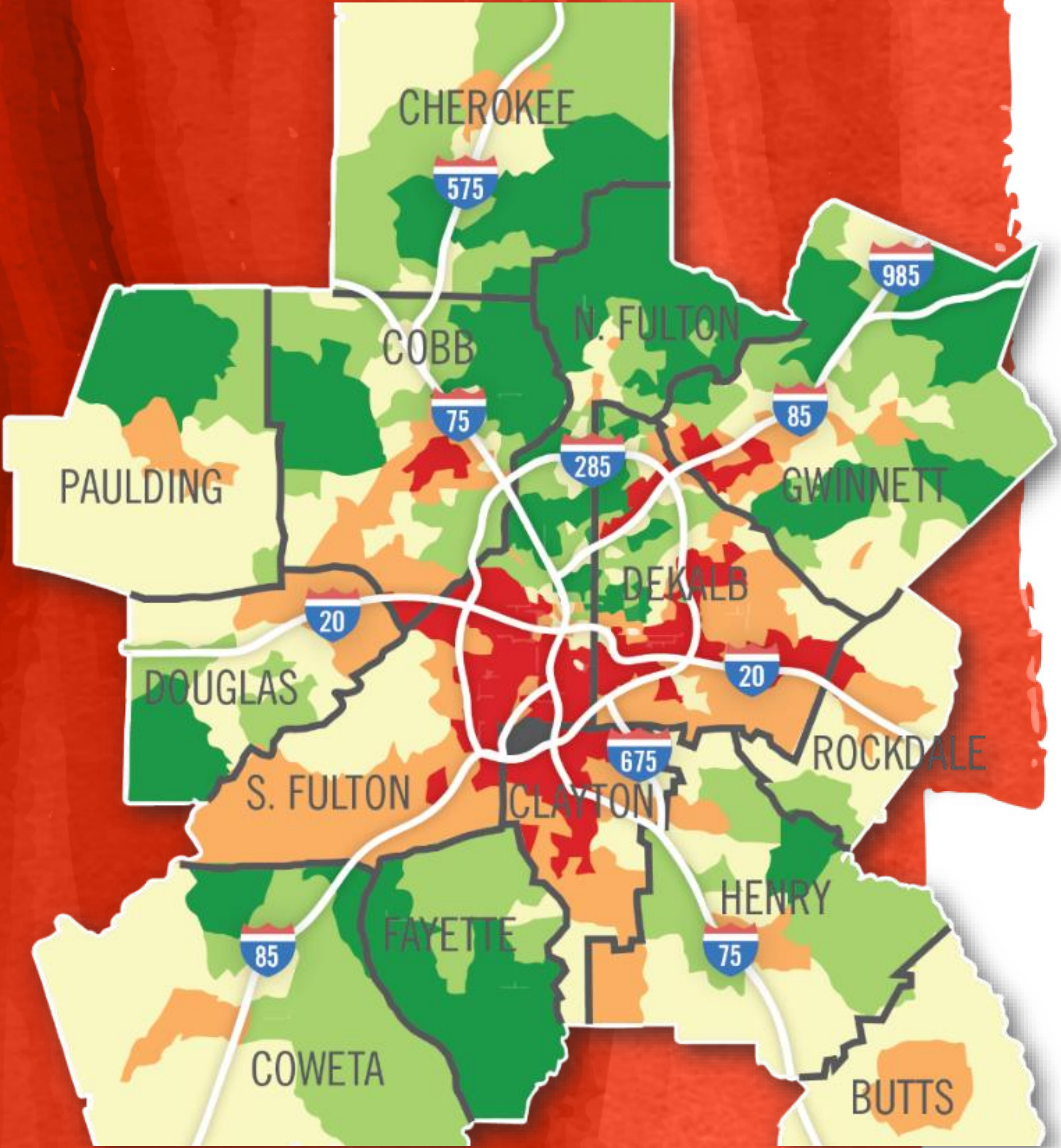
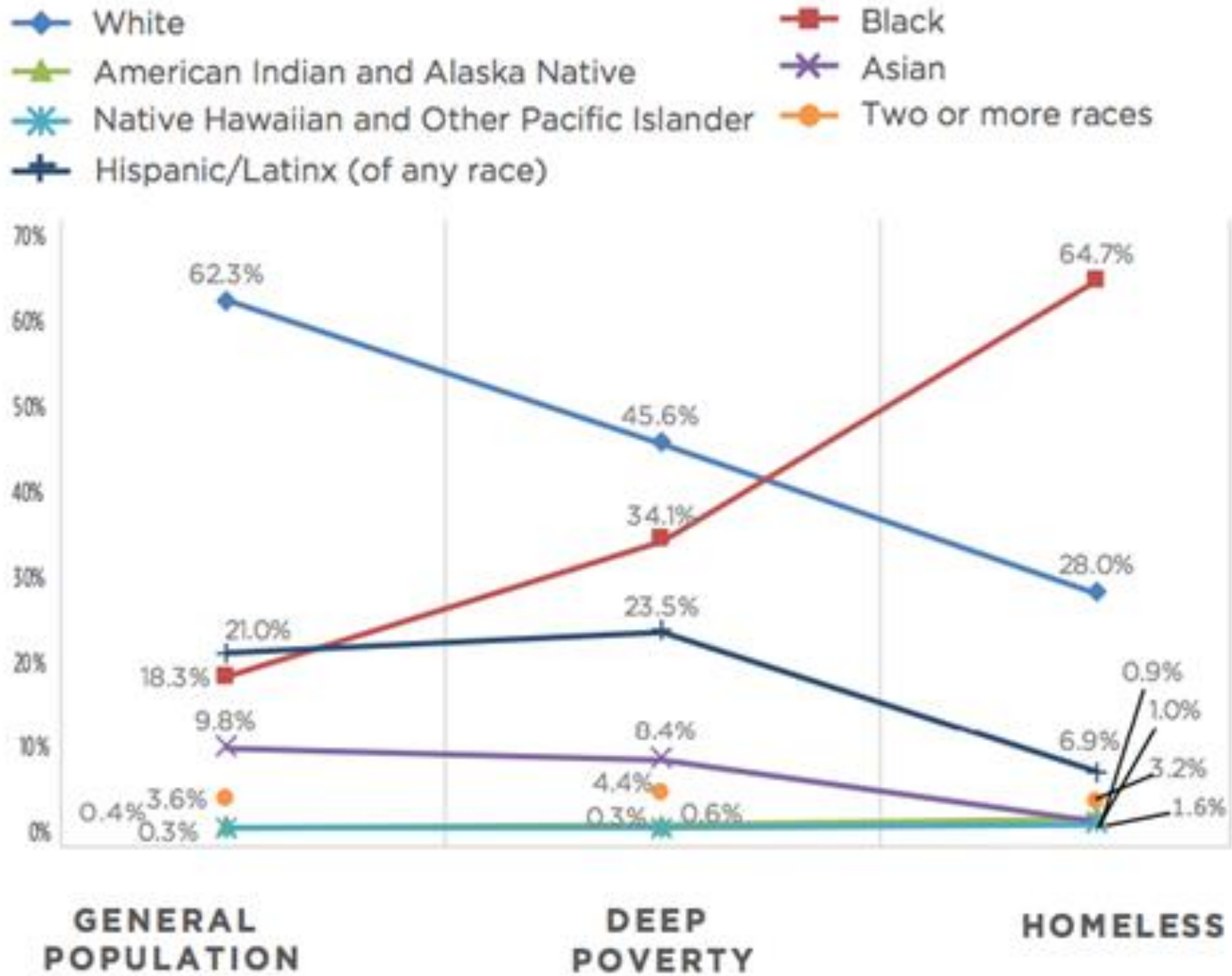


Figure 1a: Comparison By Race/Ethnicity*

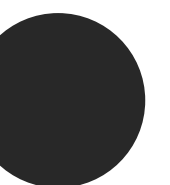


Research Overview



SPARC worked with local partners to collect data on the following:

- HMIS data from fiscal years 2011 to 2016.
- Interviews with people of color experiencing homelessness
- Focus groups



Research Findings

- Black people were overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness
- Homelessness among American Indian/Alaskan Natives is disproportionate
- Homeless services workforce is not representative
- lack of economic capital
- Lack of housing options
- High levels of behavioral and mental health issues
- Multi-generational system involvement

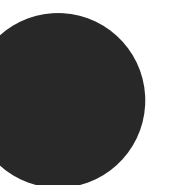
Additional Stats and Findings



Research Recommendations: Organizational Change



- ☐ Train all staff on understanding racism and the intersection of racism and homelessness
- ☐ Invest in leaders of color
- ☐ Create positions focused on creating equity-based responses to homelessness
- ☐ Create greater racial and ethnic diversity on boards of directors
- ☐ Ensure involvement in community efforts designed to remediate racial inequity
- ☐ Develop behavioral health interventions, DV programs, and supportive services for POC



Research Recommendations: Policy Change

- ❑ Fair housing protections
- ❑ Regulated national housing market
- ❑ New affordable housing stock
- ❑ Regulate evictions more closely
- ❑ National tenants' rights legislation
- ❑ Rent control
- ❑ Criminal justice system reform to reduce felony-related barriers to housing and employment
- ❑ Child welfare system reform
- ❑ Immigration policies



For More information

Visit the SPARC website at:
[**http://center4si.com/sparc/**](http://center4si.com/sparc/)

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