



RESEARCH REPORT

Inclusive Recovery in US Cities

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Introduction

A decade after the start of the Great Recession, economic recovery in the US has been uneven—not only across cities and regions, but also within them. In many cities that have witnessed significant economic growth, income inequalities are widening, housing costs are consuming an ever-larger share of family incomes, and homelessness is on the rise (Glyn and Fox 2017; Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University 2017).¹ In some of these cities, local leaders are prioritizing policies that harness growth for broadly shared benefit, including easing housing affordability pressures, preventing displacement and strengthening safety nets.² In cities that have been left behind by the national recovery or continue to lose ground, local leaders are increasingly linking economic development to inclusion goals to ensure that all residents can contribute to turning around the local economy and share the benefits when economic fortunes shift (Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities et al. 2017; Mallach and Brachman 2013). Across all types of cities, local leaders are beginning to recognize that economic growth does not automatically lead to inclusion; rather intentional strategies are needed (Einstein et al. 2017; Pacetti 2014).

A new body of research on inclusive growth has emerged to help build the evidence base for local policies and tools that city leaders can use to harness economic growth for shared prosperity (Ali and Son 2007; Benner and Pastor 2015; De Souza Briggs, Pendall, and Rubin 2015; McKinley 2010; PolicyLink and PERE 2016; Shearer et al. 2017). But the inclusive growth lens can obscure differences across local contexts and market conditions. Cities today are at different stages and trajectories of economic health. Much of the inclusive growth literature focuses on cities with strong or swiftly improving economies. But how transferable are strategies in these markets to places currently experiencing economic distress?

When city leaders are navigating an economic recovery, they have a robust (if still evolving) body of research to turn to when developing their economic development strategies (Feyrer, Sacerdote, and Stern 2007; Gray and Scardamalia 2014; Hill et al. 2012; Kodrzycki and Muñoz 2010; Wolman, Ford, and Hill 1994). But measures of inclusion are largely absent from this literature. Where they do appear, they test whether inclusion can drive or sustain an economic recovery, not result from it (Wolman et al. 2017). It is still not clear if economic recovery leads to greater inclusion and, if so, under what circumstances.

In this report, we begin to fill these knowledge gaps. To do so, we conduct the first empirical analysis of how economic health and inclusion interact in US cities over several decades. We report on trends in economic health and inclusion across a large sample of cities, as well as within a smaller subset of cities that have experienced an economic recovery. Because we are interested in better understanding not only *whether* but also *how* an economic recovery can support inclusive outcomes, we delve deeper into four cities that outperformed their peers on inclusion measures during their recovery. Through discussions with individuals, an in-person convening, and review of literature, we identify a set of key lessons and common “building blocks” that can help support progress on inclusion during a city’s economic recovery.

Because inclusive recovery has not been a focus of prior literature, before measuring it, we offer the following definition for an inclusive recovery: *An inclusive recovery occurs when a place overcomes economic distress in a way that provides the opportunity for all residents—especially historically excluded populations—to benefit from and contribute to economic prosperity.* We developed this definition in consultation with local leaders in economically recovered cities to ensure its relevance to ongoing debates on the ground about how to not only activate an inclusive recovery, but also sustain its gains. The components of this definition correspond directly to the measurement principles we use for our quantitative analysis (described in more detail in Part I). We begin by measuring dynamic trends in a city’s economic health over several decades to determine if and when a place has *overcome economic distress*. Next, we measure economic inclusion broadly by combining indicators that capture income segregation and housing affordability—or a resident’s ability to *benefit from economic growth*—with indicators that capture a resident’s ability to *contribute to economic growth*, such as educational attainment and job quality. Finally, we assess the inclusion of *historically excluded populations* by measuring disparities between white residents and people of color on indicators similar to those used to measure economic inclusion. This allows us to understand how race and ethnicity affect a resident’s ability to benefit from and contribute to economic growth.

Our overall inclusion index combines the economic inclusion and racial inclusion indices for a composite view of inclusion in a city, but the two are also analyzed separately. We distinguish between economic inclusion and racial inclusion because it is common for cities to experience economic growth while leaving certain groups behind: this is especially true for communities of color, given the longstanding history of race-based discrimination and segregation in this country (Greene, Austin Turner, and Gourevitch 2017; Kijakazi et al. 2016). We pay special attention to those cases in which economic inclusion and racial inclusion diverge, as these examples may offer important insights into

whether achieving inclusion is contingent on the deliberate use of targeted policy actions that address group-based discrimination or structural barriers.

Our research speaks to a broader range of cities and examines inclusive recovery over a longer period and for a larger number of cities than previous work. Our analysis considers changes in economic health across more than three decades, during which many of today's economic powerhouses faced stark downturns and recovered using a diverse set of strategies with varying degrees of intentionality. Some of these cities even managed to pair their economic comebacks with improved dimensions of inclusion, and they offer a wealth of experiences and lessons learned from which other cities in the process of navigating an economic recovery can benefit.

Most analyses of inclusion and growth focus on metropolitan regions, so city leaders are often left without information on how to create and implement policies over which they have direct control. We undertake our analysis at the city rather than metropolitan or regional level because cities often control key policies and deliver key services that are fundamental to achieving inclusive outcomes. Community groups and employers are organized at the city level and often enjoy more direct influence over the day-to-day lives of residents.

An inclusive recovery occurs when a place overcomes economic distress in a way that provides the opportunity for all residents—especially historically excluded populations—to benefit from and contribute to economic prosperity.

In Part I, we describe the methods used to measure inclusive recovery in cities and the findings from across all cities in the sample, as well as the recovered cities. On average and across the full sample, economically healthy cities tend to be more inclusive than distressed ones. However, an economic recovery, in which cities move from economic distress to health, does not guarantee gains in inclusion. Though cities that recover economically tend to improve on overall inclusion during their recovery, there is wide variation of this inclusion. More than half of the cities that experienced an economic recovery lost ground on either racial or economic inclusion during their recovery. This suggests that cities can harness economic recovery to improve inclusion, but either intentional strategies or other preconditions may need to be met to realize these gains.

In Part II, we share lessons learned from case studies of four cities that outperformed their peers on both racial and economic inclusion during their recovery. These are places that successfully harnessed their recovery to improve inclusion outcomes, even if they have much work left to do. We extract from these case studies eight “building blocks” for inclusive recovery. Though no single combination of these building blocks holds the key to an inclusive recovery, they each point to the importance of creating open and inclusive decisionmaking processes and adopting intentional strategies to do better with and for populations often left out of traditional economic development models.

We conclude by suggesting a path forward that includes evaluating policies and practices adopted in more recent years to support inclusive growth and recovery and monitoring progress on inclusion outcomes to sustain progress over time. We need to better understand what public and private leaders in distressed cities can do to lay the foundation for inclusion as they navigate an economic recovery. It is not clear that their solution set is the same as cities that have never experienced economic distress or are currently thriving economically. There may be distinct challenges, such as less public revenue to reinvest in human capital. But there may also be distinct opportunities, such as low-cost land that can be acquired to preserve affordability. New knowledge is needed to help local leaders build inclusion into their recovery strategies and institutionalize them moving forward.

When cities are waging comebacks from economic hardship, many decisions must be made regarding where to allocate resources and how best to deploy them. These inflection points are opportunities to promote greater inclusion. They spark local conversations about a city’s future and demand bold, coordinated action. If these conversations include diverse communities and stakeholders and actions are aimed at harnessing growth for inclusion, all residents can share in future growth.

Cities can harness economic recovery to improve inclusion, but either intentional strategies or other preconditions may need to be met to realize these gains.

Part 1. Analysis of Inclusive Recovery in Cities

To explore how economic health, economic inclusion, and racial inclusion are related, we create indices for each and examine how they interact over time in 274 of the largest cities in the US. We then explore how inclusion changes in cities that have recovered from economic distress since 1980.

We seek to answer three main questions through this quantitative analysis.

1. Is economic health associated with economic and racial inclusion in cities?
2. What happens to economic and racial inclusion when cities recover from economic distress?
3. Did recovery from the Great Recession differ from past periods of recovery in terms of inclusion outcomes?

Below, we summarize our indices, methods, and findings from our quantitative analysis. We do not systematically explore the reasons for the patterns that we uncover, but we encourage others to use the data we provide online to dive deeper into these trends.³

This analysis also allows us to compare economically recovered cities based on changes in inclusion outcomes and identify a subset of cities that outperformed their peers on inclusion metrics during their recovery period. In the next part, we summarize qualitative findings from case studies of four cities that improved on both racial and economic inclusion during their recovery period.

Measuring Inclusive Recovery

To understand how economic health, economic inclusion, and racial inclusion interact, we create two types of indices. First, we create an economic health index that measures the strength of a city's economy. Second, we create three indices of inclusion: an economic inclusion index, a racial inclusion index, and an overall inclusion index. Together, these indices operationalize our definition of an inclusive recovery and provide insight into how well all residents—especially those who have been historically excluded—have the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to a city's economic prosperity.

Each variable in these indices was selected based on a review of the research literature and available data (see appendix A for a detailed literature review of the selected measures). We include only measures for which data are available back to 1980 at the city level for all cities in the US.⁴ This limits the available indicators but allows us to look at relative measures over a longer historical time frame and across a large sample of cities. We also include indicators in our inclusion indices that reflect policy areas over which city leaders have some control (e.g., housing, job quality, education) so that the indices can directly inform local policy change. Each indicator is weighted equally in the indices. The indices and indicators are detailed below.

Indices and Indicators

The index of economic health captures the strength a city’s local economy. This index assesses the overall economic health of a city without directly measuring inclusion. It consists of the following measures: employment growth (the percentage change in the number of people who are in the labor force and are employed), unemployment rate, housing vacancy rate, and median family income (table 1; see appendix A for detailed calculations of each indicator within the index).

TABLE 1
Economic Health Index

Index
Employment growth
Median family income
Unemployment rate
Housing vacancy rate

The remaining indices measure inclusion, or the ability of all residents —especially those who have been historically excluded—to share in benefiting from and contributing to a city’s economic prosperity. The first inclusion index measures economic inclusion, or the ability of residents at the lower end of the income distribution to benefit from and contribute to the economy. This index is made up of measures of spatial segregation by income, housing affordability as measured by rent burden, labor market equity as measured by the share of the population who are below the federal poverty level with at least one householder working full time, and service quality measured by the share of 16- to 19-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates—a proxy for the high school dropout rate and school quality.

The third index measures racial inclusion, or the ability of residents of color⁵ to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity. The indicators in this index mirror those of the economic inclusion

index to the best of our ability, given data limitations. This index includes a measure of spatial segregation by race, housing equity as measured by the racial homeownership gap, labor market equity as measured by the racial poverty rate gap, and educational equity, as measured by the racial educational attainment gap. We also include one additional measure in the racial inclusion index that measures what share of the city’s population are people of color. We include this measure since a reduction in the share of a city’s people of color (or increase in the white share) could signal displacement or gentrification, which we consider to be a reduction in inclusion.⁶

The last index combines the economic and racial inclusion indices into an overall inclusion index. These indices are summarized in table 2 and detailed below.

TABLE 2
Economic Inclusion, Racial Inclusion, and Overall Inclusion Indices

Overall Inclusion Index	
Economic inclusion index	Racial inclusion index
Income segregation	Racial segregation
Rent burden	Racial homeownership gap
Working poor	Racial poverty rate gap
Proxy for high school dropout rate ^a	Racial educational attainment gap
	Share of the population that are people of color

^a Percentage of 16- to 19-year-olds not in school and without a high school degree.

Geography and Time Period

To explore how these indices interact, we collect data on the 274 cities in the US that had a population of 100,000 or more in any decade since 1970. We include only incorporated cities in our analysis and exclude census-designated places⁷ because they lack a municipal government that can adopt policies that support economic growth or inclusion. We look at city boundaries as they change over time since they correspond to the political boundaries in which policy can influence economic health and inclusion.

We create indices for each of these cities in the years 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2013. These years were selected based on data availability and to explore how inclusion has changed over a long period. We use data from 2013 rather than 2010 since it is more current and to minimize anomalous or short-term trends caused by the Great Recession. We separately explore recovery since the Great Recession in a sub-analysis using data from 2008 and 2013.

Index Creation and City Classifications

To calculate indices of economic health and inclusion at the city level in each study year, we first take each of the indicators listed above and turn them into z-scores where the mean is zero and the standard deviation is one in each year. This standardizes the values across measures so that they are comparable. We then sum up the z-scores for the indicators within each index and divide by the number of indicators in that index. This process gives each city an index score, or an average z-score for each index, which is relative to the other cities in the sample. We then rank cities based on each index score. We do not employ weights in the construction of these indices; that is, every indicator is treated as an equal input into its respective index.

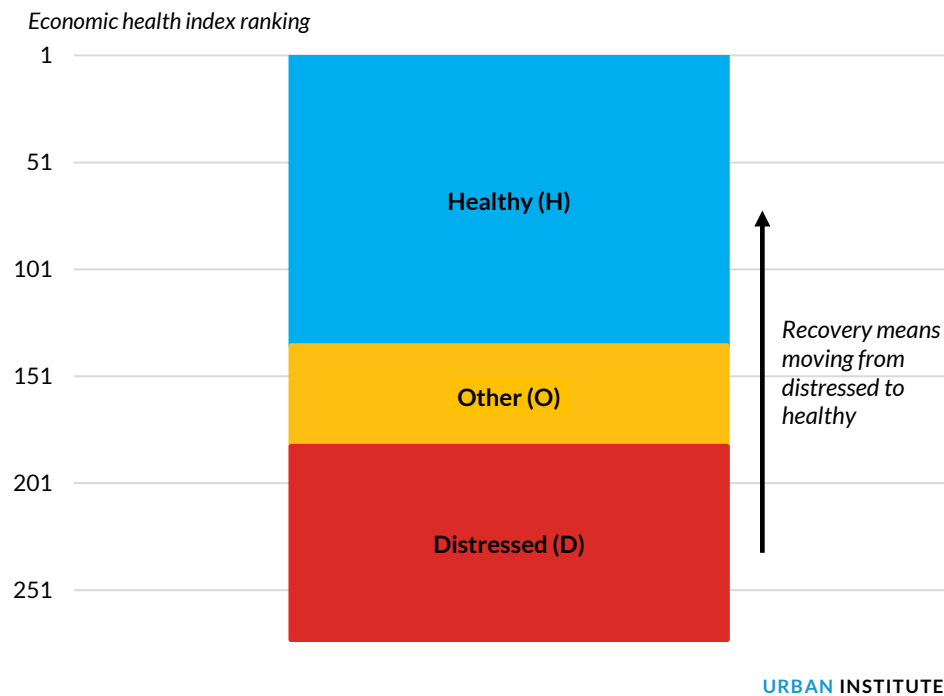
We use the economic health index to identify cities that recovered from distress during any period from 1980 to 2013. In each study year, we first classify cities based on their economic health score into three categories:

- “Distressed” (D) cities ranking in the bottom third of the sample on economic health score.
- “Other” (O) cities ranking between the bottom third and top half of the sample on their economic health score.
- “Healthy” (H) cities ranking in the top half of the sample on their economic health score.

We then create a fourth category of “recovered” (R) cities that moved from distressed to healthy in any subsequent year (figure 1). Many of the recovered cities moved from distressed to healthy in a single period (decade or 13 years); others move from distressed to other and then to healthy over one or more periods. We treat the time between a city being classified as distressed and it being classified as healthy as its “recovery period.” We further define cities as “always healthy” if they were healthy in every year in the sample, “always distressed” if they were distressed in every year of our analysis, and “other” if they were neither recovered, always healthy, nor always distressed (for example, if they moved from healthy to distressed, or distressed to other but not to healthy).

FIGURE 1

Defining Economic Health and Recovery



This method creates relative rather than absolute measures. Each of the 274 cities is compared against the others rather than against itself over time. Therefore, a city could theoretically do worse on an indicator over time but still improve its z-score if other cities in the sample dropped further on the same indicator within that given period. Though not ideal, the relative approach is necessary to allow for indicator-to-indicator comparison. By considering distance from the mean score, each of the indicators can be compared on the same plane and thus compiled into composite indices. Additionally, such an approach allows cities to be judged based on how they fare on each measure within the broader national urban context. Benchmarking cities against one another shows how cities change controlling for macro-level events (such as economic recessions) that may result in significant decreases or gains in certain indicators across all cities.

We then look at how economic health and inclusion are related and how recovered cities fare on inclusion both in each study year and over time. If a city's ranking on the overall inclusion index increased during its recovery, it has then "improved" on inclusion during its recovery. We then explore trends in the data by examining subgroups based on overall economic health and city size. We also separately explore patterns of racial and economic inclusion. We do not classify cities as "inclusive" or "exclusive" since our primary interest is in how cities that recover change on inclusion measures over time compared with their peers.

Since the periods between each data point are long (10 or 13 years), the type of distress and recovery that we capture is long term in nature. Our historical analysis is not likely to capture how cities respond to short-term shocks. To learn more about recovery and inclusion in the face of a short-term shock, we look at changes in inclusion for economically recovered cities between 2008 and 2013, a period in which cities across the US were recovering from the financial crisis and Great Recession.

Interpreting Results

In the following sections, we present results using city rankings on a scale of 1 to 274. A city ranked 1 means that it scored highest on that index in a particular year. For the economic health index, this means that the city was the most economically “healthy” in that year; for the inclusion indices, this means that the city was the most “inclusive” in that year. A city ranked 274 means that it has the lowest score on that index in that year or is the least economically healthy or inclusive. We also look at changes in rankings and sort cities based on these changes, so that a city that moves up in ranking the most is listed as the first city and a city that moves down in ranking the most is listed as the last city in the list.

We also use correlations to show the relationships between the indices and other characteristics that might not be apparent from comparing rankings in tables. However, these correlations should not be interpreted as causal effects—there are myriad of variables that influence these relationships and causation may flow in both directions.

Findings

We first examine inclusion levels for the entire sample of 274 cities from 1980 through 2013. We then narrow this sample down to a subset of 41 recovered cities and examine how inclusion changed during their recoveries. Finally, we analyze cities that recovered between 2008 and 2013 to better understand the post-Great Recession period. In each case, we analyze trends across the economic health, economic inclusion, racial inclusion, and overall inclusion indices.

General Trends across the Full Sample

ECONOMICALLY HEALTHY CITIES TEND TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE THAN DISTRESSED ONES

In general, when looking across all 274 cities, healthy cities tend to have higher rankings on economic, racial, and overall inclusion compared with their distressed counterparts. For example, all the cities that

ranked in the top 10 on overall inclusion in 2013 were economically healthy in all years in our study (see appendix B). This is not the case in every instance, however, and there are several cities that perform poorly on economic health but receive high scores on the economic and racial inclusion indices, and vice versa. For example, Killeen, Texas, was economically distressed throughout all periods in our study but had high overall inclusion rankings of 40, 12, and 10 in 1990, 2000, and 2013, respectively. Conversely, St. Paul, Minnesota, a city that was economically healthy in every study year, ranked poorly on overall inclusion over the same years, with rankings of 221, 197, and 257, respectively.⁸ Despite these counter examples, healthy cities tended to exhibit greater levels of inclusion.

There is a strong relationship between the economic health of a city and a city’s ability to support inclusion for its residents. Table 3 shows that, when tested, economic health is strongly correlated with economic inclusion and somewhat correlated with racial inclusion. To examine this trend, we create a unique observation for each city for 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2013 and look at each economic health index classification (healthy, other, recovered, and distressed). After all years are pooled together, healthy cities have the highest ranking across all three inclusion indices by significant margins (table 4). Distressed cities fare the worst on average, with cities designated other and recovered falling somewhere in the middle.

TABLE 3
Correlations between Economic Health Index and Inclusion Indices

	Overall inclusion	Economic inclusion	Racial inclusion
Economic health	0.53	0.62	0.27

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

Notes: Cities are ranked on a scale of 1 to 274 with 1 being the highest (the most healthy or inclusive) and 274 being the lowest ranking.

TABLE 4
Average Inclusion Ranking by Economic Health Category

Economic health category in given year	Pooled Average Rank across Years		
	Overall inclusion	Economic inclusion	Racial inclusion
Healthy	95	88	114
Other	141	134	142
Recovered	151	167	139
Distressed	180	191	157
Legend	More inclusive		Less inclusive

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

Notes: Cities are ranked on a scale of 1 to 274 with 1 being the highest (the most healthy or inclusive) and 274 being the lowest rank.

SMALLER CITIES TEND TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE THAN LARGER ONES

Smaller cities are, on average, more inclusive across all the inclusion indices, with an average overall inclusion ranking for small cities of 127 compared with 168 and 182 for medium and large cities respectively (table 5).⁹ The correlation analysis affirmed this trend, with slight negative correlations existing between population and both economic and overall inclusion (table 6).

TABLE 5
Average Inclusion Ranking by City Size

City size	Pooled Average Ranking across Years		
	Overall inclusion ranking	Economic inclusion ranking	Racial inclusion ranking
Small (<250,000)	127	131	126
Medium (250,000–750,000)	168	160	167
Large (>750,000)	182	153	200
Legend	More inclusive		Less inclusive

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

TABLE 6
Correlations between City Size and Inclusion Indices

	Overall inclusion	Economic inclusion	Racial inclusion
Population	-0.17	-0.18	-0.10

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND RACIAL INCLUSION DO NOT ALWAYS TREND TOGETHER

Cities that rank highly on economic inclusion do not always rank highly on racial inclusion. As seen in table 7, the correlation between the two is positive but weak—many cities in our sample fare well on one and poorly on the other. For instance, in 2013, Sioux Falls, SD, ranked 38th on economic inclusion but 274th on racial inclusion, and Camden, NJ, ranked 271st on economic inclusion but 13th on racial inclusion. In fact, in that same year, over half of the cities in our sample had economic inclusion rankings that were more than 50 points different from their racial inclusion ranking. This highlights the importance of monitoring racial inclusion in addition to economic inclusion.

TABLE 7
Correlation between Racial and Economic Inclusion Indices

	Economic inclusion
Racial inclusion	0.35

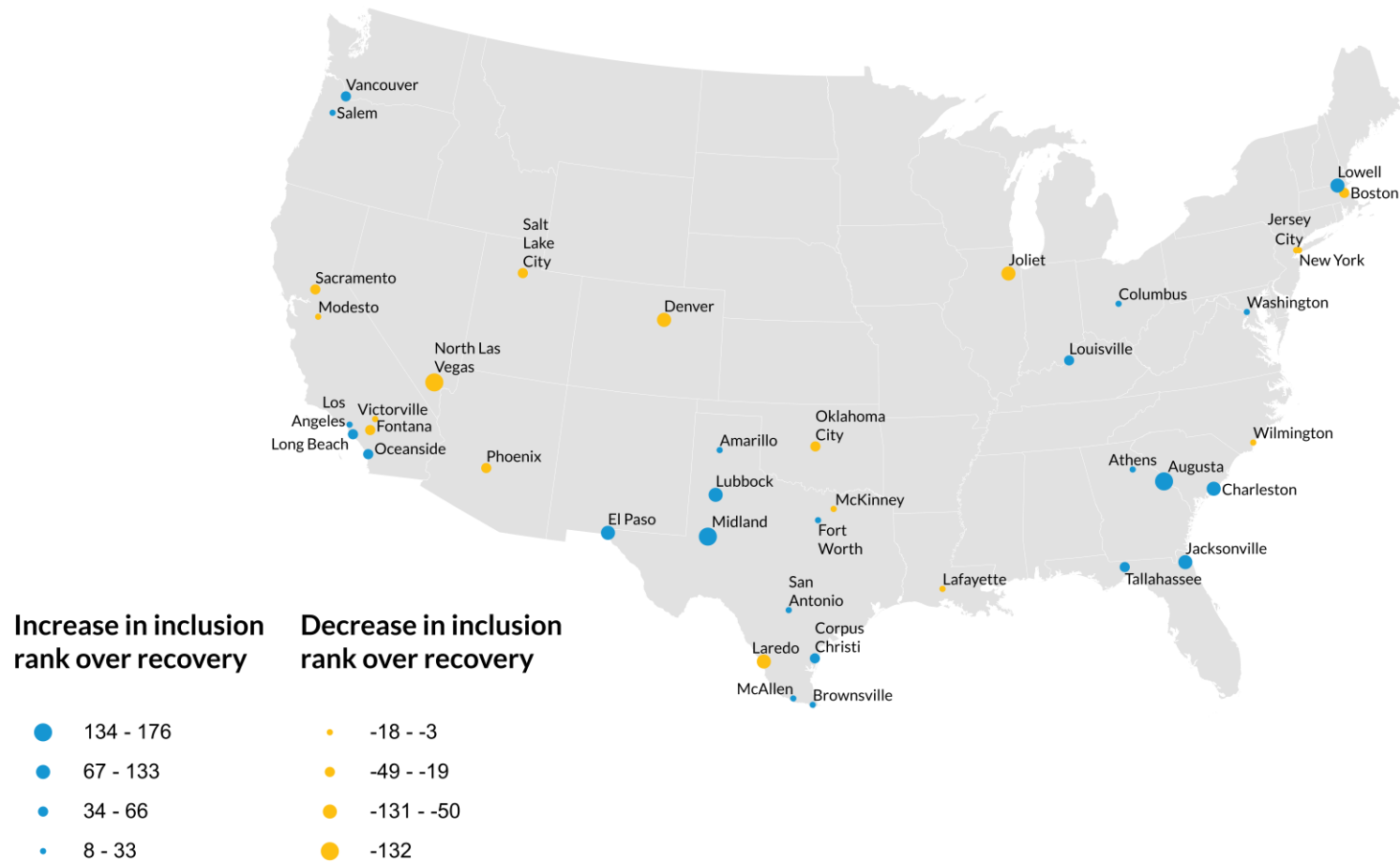
Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

There is a strong relationship between the economic health of a city and a city's ability to support inclusion for its residents.

Analysis of Recovered Cities

To understand how economic recovery and inclusion relate, we next examine the subset of cities that recovered economically in any 10-year (or 13-year for 1990 to 2013) period between 1980 and 2013. Of the 274 cities in the sample, 41 moved from the economically distressed category to healthy within this time period (figure 2). In this analysis, these are “recovered cities”.¹⁰ Throughout this section, we look at how recovered cities’ rankings on economic, racial, and overall inclusion change over the course of their economic recovery (see also box 1).

FIGURE 2
Map of Recovered Cities



Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

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CITIES TEND TO IMPROVE ON OVERALL INCLUSION DURING ECONOMIC RECOVERY PERIODS

The cities that recovered from economic distress between 1980 and 2013 varied widely in terms of their levels of inclusion, but, on average, they improved on overall inclusion during their recovery. Table 8 shows the economic health status for these cities in each year, as well as their overall inclusion index rankings. The cities are sorted by their change in overall inclusion ranking during their recovery.

As the table shows, Midland, Texas, recovered from distress between 1990 and 2013. It also had the second largest increase in overall inclusion during this period, jumping 160 rankings. On average, cities improved 20 rankings on overall inclusion during their recovery.

However, there is wide variation in changes on overall inclusion during recovery. Eighteen of the 41 recovered cities slipped on overall inclusion rankings during their recovery. North Las Vegas, for example, recovered from economic distress between 1990 and 2000, but it dropped 132 rankings during this period.

A city's starting point on overall inclusion before its recovery may impact its ability to improve on inclusion, and cities that started their recovery period with low rankings on inclusion tended to gain the most during their recovery. For instance, the 11 recovered cities exhibiting the greatest improvement on overall inclusion ranking were all in the bottom half for overall inclusion before their recovery. A correlation analysis confirms this trend, showing a negative relationship between a city's ranking on overall inclusion in its final year of distress and subsequent change on inclusion during its recovery (table 9). These results are intuitive—a city that performs poorly on inclusion metrics when it is economically distressed has the most to gain during its recovery.

However, there were also examples of these results diverging. Vancouver, Washington, and Corpus Christi, Texas, ranked in the top half of cities for inclusion at the start of their recovery and still saw significant improvement by the end of their recovery (Vancouver rose 41 rankings and Corpus Christi 39). Further, for cities that declined on overall inclusion over their recovery, starting points ranged from an overall inclusion ranking of 24 (Jersey City, New Jersey) to 263 (McKinney, Texas). Though it may be easier for recovering cities with lower levels of inclusion initially to make rapid gains, the data show that any city can be susceptible to losing ground no matter its starting point.

As mentioned, in this study, we follow city boundaries as they change over time. Over the span of analysis, some cities experienced changes to their boundaries by way of annexation, consolidations, mergers, and (less often) detachments. City-county mergers generally represent the most dramatic of such cases. In three instances—Athens-Clarke County, Georgia; Augusta-Richmond County, Georgia;

and Louisville-Jefferson County, KY—cities merged with their surrounding county within the period of economic growth that vaulted them from distressed to healthy and resulted in their designation as a recovered city. Consequently, improvements on any of the indicators or indices may reflect changing boundaries rather than actual gains for the city’s residents. Augusta appears to be an example of the former as it moved from distressed to healthy in the aftermath of its merger, only to fall back into the distressed category in the following decade. Conversely, in the case of Louisville, a robustness check determined that gains in inclusion in large part reflect true improvement (see Louisville case study in appendix C).

Average index rankings across the recovered cities show that overall inclusion gradually improved in the lead-up to these cities’ recovery periods and continued through the recovery and after. Gains in economic health, on average, tended to hold even two periods after the start of recovery (figure 3).

TABLE 8

Summary Table for Recovered Cities, 1980–2013

Place	Recovery period	Economic health category				Ranking on overall inclusion index				Change overall inclusion ranking over recovery period
		1980	1990	2000	2013	1980	1990	2000	2013	
Augusta, GA ^a	1990–2000	D	D	R	D	264	267	91	142	176
Midland, TX	1990–2013	H	D	O	R	228	232	155	72	160
Jacksonville, FL	1980–2000	D	O	R	D	229	123	96	97	133
Charleston, SC	1980–2013	D	O	O	R	269	261	237	158	111
El Paso, TX	2000–2013	O	D	D	R	158	215	165	62	103
Lowell, MA	1990–2000	O	D	R	O	150	239	139	79	100
Lubbock, TX	1990–2013	O	D	O	R	241	244	207	148	96
Tallahassee, FL	1980–1990	D	R	D	D	268	202	221	183	66
Louisville, KY ^a	2000–2013	D	D	D	R	252	245	257	194	63
Long Beach, CA	2000–2013	H	H	D	R	223	260	268	215	53
Oceanside, CA	1980–1990	D	R	H	H	243	200	137	40	43
Vancouver, WA	1980–2000	D	O	R	H	119	96	78	45	41
Corpus Christi, TX	2000–2013	H	D	D	R	131	130	114	75	39
Brownsville, TX	2000–2013	O	D	D	R	257	269	254	221	33
San Antonio, TX	1990–2000	O	D	R	H	142	169	140	134	29
Los Angeles, CA	2000–2013	H	O	D	R	261	270	269	241	28
Athens, GA ^a	1990–2000	D	D	R	D	189	148	124	118	24
Salem, OR	1980–1990	D	R	O	O	160	138	239	186	22
Columbus, OH	1980–1990	D	R	H	O	126	107	99	115	19
Fort Worth, TX	1990–2013	O	D	O	R	217	228	200	213	15
Amarillo, TX	1990–2013	H	D	O	R	195	233	231	219	14
Washington, DC	2000–2013	D	O	D	R	111	153	198	184	14
McAllen, TX	2000–2013	O	D	D	R	238	264	154	146	8
New York, NY	2000–2013	D	O	D	R	179	192	194	197	-3
Wilmington, NC	2000–2013	D	D	D	R	244	230	247	252	-5
Jersey City, NJ	2000–2013	D	D	D	R	54	43	24	30	-6
Lafayette, LA	1990–2013	H	D	O	R	196	226	232	232	-6
McKinney, TX	1980–2000	D	O	R	H	263	274	273	35	-10
Victorville, CA	1980–1990	D	R	O	O	47	59	48	65	-12
Modesto, CA	1980–1990	D	R	O	D	98	112	94	92	-14
Boston, MA	1990–2013	D	D	O	R	109	100	98	119	-19
Phoenix, AZ	1990–2000	H	D	R	O	240	249	270	270	-21
Fontana, CA	1980–1990	D	R	O	H	34	60	61	69	-26
Indianapolis, IN ^a	1980–1990	D	R	O	D	156	183	153	226	-27
Salt Lake City, UT	1990–2000	D	D	R	H	232	181	210	225	-29
Sacramento, CA	1980–1990	D	R	O	O	60	93	80	90	-33
Oklahoma City, OK	1990–2013	O	D	O	R	182	170	196	206	-36
Denver, CO	1990–2000	O	D	R	H	191	186	236	217	-50
Laredo, TX	2000–2013	D	D	D	R	95	194	145	204	-59
Joliet, IL	1980–2000	D	O	R	H	155	166	245	187	-90
North Las Vegas, NV	1990–2000	D	D	R	H	112	120	252	89	-132
Average across cities						178	184	174	149	20
Ranking legend	More inclusive									Less inclusive
Change in rank	Greater improvement									Greater decline

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

Notes: D = distressed; H = healthy; R = recovery; O = other.

^a This city consolidated between 1970 and 2013.

TABLE 9

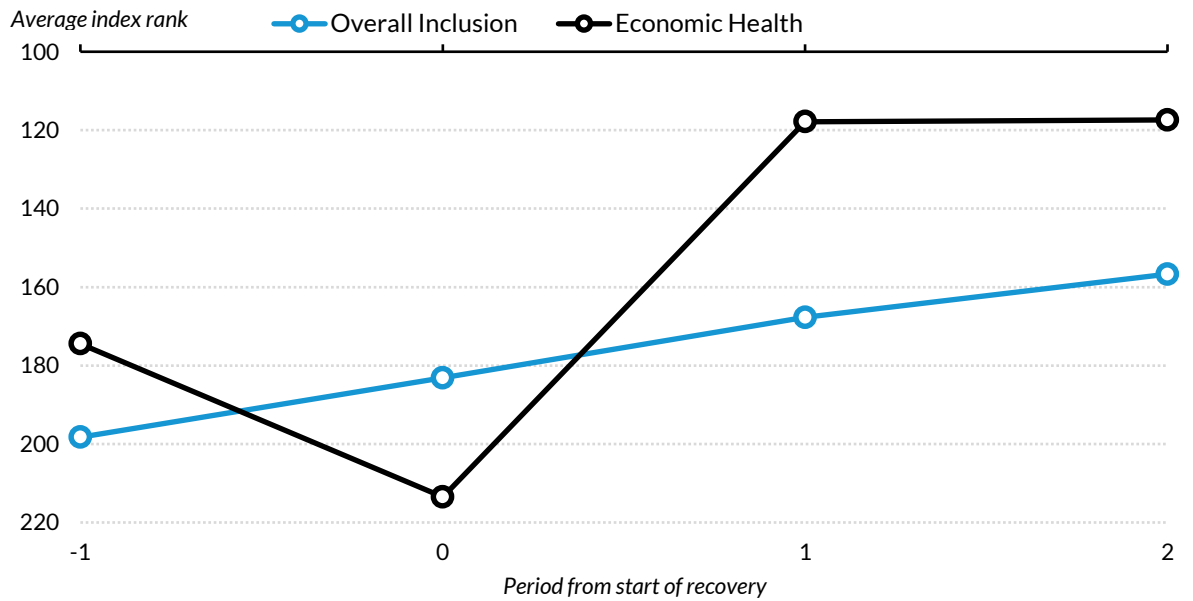
Correlation between Overall Inclusion before Recovery and Change on Overall Inclusion

Overall inclusion before recovery	
Change in inclusion during recovery period	-0.49

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

FIGURE 3

Economic Health and Overall Inclusion Ranking by Period from Recovery



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Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

RACIAL INCLUSION TENDS TO IMPROVE MORE THAN ECONOMIC INCLUSION DURING RECOVERY

Over the average recovery period, while inclusion increased overall, cities experienced a greater gain in racial inclusion than economic inclusion. When all 41 recovered cities are considered over the course of their respective recovery periods, they show an average increase of 20 rankings on racial inclusion and 10 rankings on economic inclusion (table 10). Two notable examples are Charleston, South Carolina, (improvement of 173 rankings on racial inclusion and improvement of 21 rankings on economic inclusion) and El Paso, Texas, (improvement of 102 rankings on racial inclusion and improvement of 44 rankings on economic inclusion). Though the recovered cities with the largest overall inclusion increases tended to see large gains on both indices (e.g., Midland, Texas, and Jacksonville, Florida), there was a greater divergence between economic and racial inclusion in cities that saw only modest gains or declines in overall inclusion, as is to be expected since overall inclusion is a compilation of the other two

indices. For instance, Wilmington, North Carolina, rose 13 spots on racial inclusion and dropped 27 rankings on economic inclusion during its recovery. Notably, more than half of the 41 recovered cities experienced a decline in either racial or economic inclusion during their recovery.

TABLE 10
Change in Inclusion Ranking during Period of Recovery

Place	Recovery period	Change in Ranking over Recovery Period		
		Overall inclusion index	Economic inclusion index	Racial inclusion index
Augusta, GA ^a	1990-2000	176	176	114
Midland, TX	1990-2013	160	118	96
Jacksonville, FL	1980-2000	133	100	105
Charleston, SC	1980-2013	111	21	173
El Paso, TX	2000-2013	103	44	102
Lowell, MA	1990-2000	100	75	31
Lubbock, TX	1990-2013	96	106	50
Tallahassee, FL	1980-1990	66	74	39
Louisville, KY ^a	2000-2013	63	23	102
Long Beach, CA	2000-2013	53	53	45
Oceanside, CA	1980-1990	43	-7	47
Vancouver, WA	1980-2000	41	49	19
Corpus Christi, TX	2000-2013	39	23	66
Brownsville, TX	2000-2013	33	19	11
San Antonio, TX	1990-2000	29	23	21
Los Angeles, CA	2000-2013	28	64	15
Athens, GA ^a	1990-2000	24	24	6
Salem, OR	1980-1990	22	-34	74
Columbus, OH	1980-1990	19	20	13
Fort Worth, TX	1990-2013	15	0	12
Amarillo, TX	1990-2013	14	16	-7
Washington, DC	2000-2013	14	35	-7
McAllen, TX	2000-2013	8	34	-14
New York, NY	2000-2013	-3	13	-6
Wilmington, NC	2000-2013	-5	-27	13
Lafayette, LA	1990-2013	-6	7	-22
Jersey City, NJ	2000-2013	-6	-3	-29
McKinney, TX	1980-2000	-10	-111	11
Victorville, CA	1980-1990	-12	12	-60
Modesto, CA	1980-1990	-14	-50	53
Boston, MA	1990-2013	-19	-42	8
Phoenix, AZ	1990-2000	-21	-38	-33
Fontana, CA	1980-1990	-26	-118	7
Indianapolis, IN ^a	1980-1990	-27	8	-45
Salt Lake City, UT	1990-2000	-29	-35	-4
Sacramento, CA	1980-1990	-33	-12	-39
Oklahoma City, OK	1990-2013	-36	-60	2
Denver, CO	1990-2000	-50	-2	-44
Laredo, TX	2000-2013	-59	-34	1
Joliet, IL	1980-2000	-90	5	-124
North Las Vegas, NV	1990-2000	-132	-152	-5
Average across cities		20	10	20
Change in rank	Greater improvement			Greater decline

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

^a This city consolidated between 1970 and 2013.

SMALLER AND MEDIUM CITIES THAT RECOVER TEND TO GAIN MORE GROUND ON INCLUSION THAN LARGER CITIES

Over the average recovery period, smaller and medium-sized cities tended to make the largest gains in inclusion, comparative to larger cities. For overall inclusion, the 24 small recovered cities within the sample rose an average 21 rankings during their recovery, as did the 13 medium recovered cities. Conversely, large cities rose only 4, on average.

These changes also vary between economic and racial inclusion. On average, small and medium cities made the largest gains in economic inclusion during recovery, but the gains they made on racial inclusion were more modest. In contrast, the four large cities in the sample decreased one ranking on economic inclusion, on average, and had the largest average increase on racial inclusion ranking during their recovery (table 11).

TABLE 11
Average Change in Inclusion Ranking during Period of Recovery, by City Size

City size	Number of cities across years	Pooled Change in Ranking during Recovery Period		
		Overall inclusion index ranking	Economic inclusion index ranking	Racial inclusion index ranking
Small (<250,000)	24	21	15	12
Medium (250,000–749,999)	13	21	25	15
Large (>750,000)	4	8	-1	16
Change in rank	Greater improvement			Greater decline

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

Post-Recession Analysis

In the above analysis, we examine recovery over a long period (at least 10 years), which includes slower gains that cities make after a prolonged period of economic distress. To explore how inclusion changes as cities recover from a short-term shock, we examine the relationship between recovery and inclusion for cities for the years 2008 to 2013, in the wake of the financial crisis and Great Recession. We include in this analysis cities that were classified as distressed in 2008 but moved to healthy by 2013. We also include cities that were distressed at any point before 2008, were classified as other in 2008, and moved to healthy by 2013.¹¹

CITIES THAT RECOVERED BETWEEN 2008 AND 2013 TENDED TO IMPROVE ON OVERALL INCLUSION

Between 2008 and 2013, 11 cities recovered economically. Seven of these cities also improved on overall inclusion (table 12). On average, post-2008 recovered cities rose 13 rankings on overall inclusion, showing, again, a positive relationship between economic recovery and inclusion.

The set of post-2008 recovered cities had widely divergent starting points on their overall inclusion ranking in 2008, from 26 to 271. However, a city's 2008 overall inclusion index ranking only slightly affected its likelihood of improving or falling on this measure during its recovery. Table 13 shows a slightly negative relationship between overall inclusion starting point and change on overall inclusion during recovery. Some lower ranked cities, such as Oakland, California, improved the most on inclusion during its recovery, while others, such as New Orleans, Louisiana, dropped. Similarly, some high-performing cities rose in ranking during this recovery period (Vancouver, Washington) while others declined (Jersey City, New Jersey).

TABLE 12
Summary of Post-2008 Recovered Cities

Place	Ranking Overall Inclusion Index		Change in overall inclusion ranking, 2008-13
	2008	2013	
Oakland, CA	232	188	44
Denver, CO ^a	257	217	40
Corpus Christi, TX ^a	114	75	39
Vancouver, WA ^a	60	45	15
McAllen, TX ^a	158	146	12
Macon, GA ^b	271	260	11
Columbus, OH	118	115	3
Boston, MA ^a	119	119	0
New Orleans, LA	246	249	-3
Jersey City, NJ ^a	26	30	-4
Richmond, CA	110	127	-17
Average across cities	156	143	13
Ranking legend	More inclusive		Less inclusive
Change in ranking	Greater improvement		Greater decline

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

^a The cities in this table moved from "other" to "recovered," having been distressed in a period before 2008.

^b This city consolidated between 1970 and 2013.

TABLE 13
Correlation between Starting Point and Change on Overall Inclusion, 2008-13

	Overall inclusion before recovery
Change in inclusion during recovery period	-0.22

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

CITIES THAT RECOVERED BETWEEN 2008 AND 2013 TENDED TO IMPROVE MORE ON ECONOMIC INCLUSION THAN RACIAL INCLUSION

Across the sample of post-2008 recovered cities, gains to inclusion primarily occurred through increased economic rather than racial inclusion. The average change in inclusion was an increase of 15 rankings on economic inclusion but an increase of only 1 on racial inclusion. In fact, every city that increased in overall inclusion ranking had a larger increase in economic inclusion than in racial inclusion. Boston, the one city in the sample that maintained the same ranking on overall inclusion between 2008 and 2013, gained 11 rankings on economic inclusion but fell 29 rankings on racial inclusion (table 14).

TABLE 14
Change in Inclusion Ranking during the 2008-13 Recovery Period

Place	Overall inclusion index	Economic inclusion index	Racial inclusion index
Oakland, CA	44	37	3
Denver, CO ^a	40	33	21
Corpus Christi, TX ^a	39	61	21
Vancouver, WA ^a	15	10	9
McAllen, TX ^a	12	13	6
Macon, GA ^b	11	26	9
Columbus, OH	3	12	4
Boston, MA ^a	0	11	-29
New Orleans, LA	-3	-2	-17
Jersey City, NJ ^a	-4	-23	-3
Richmond, CA	-17	-14	-16
Average across cities	13	15	1
Change in rank	Greater improvement		Greater decline

Source: Author calculations from US Census Bureau data.

^a The cities in this table moved from “other” to “recovered,” having been distressed in a period before 2008.

^b This city consolidated between 1970 and 2013.

BOX 1

Inclusive Recoveries Are Not Guaranteed

These results show that cities can improve on inclusion during an economic recovery, but it is by no means guaranteed. Although the average change in inclusion for recovered cities in the sample during their recoveries was positive, almost half of them lost ground on overall inclusion and more than half lost ground on either economic or racial inclusion. In the next section, we provide lessons learned from four cities in the sample that improved on both racial and economic inclusion during their recovery. We hope these lessons can help other cities plan their recovery in such a way that increases inclusion in addition to economic health.

Part 2. Lessons Learned and Implications for Practice

In the previous section, we demonstrated that some cities improve in racial and economic inclusion during an economic recovery while other cities decline or improve on one but not the other. Though the data cannot fully explain these divergent paths, a few exemplary cities—selected for case studies because they outperformed their peers on all inclusion metrics during their economic recovery—offer insights. In this section, we draw on these case studies as well as research literature to suggest ways in which cities can recover from economic distress in a more inclusive manner.

The four cities that we examined as part of our case studies were Columbus, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; Lowell, Massachusetts; and Midland, Texas. Each city tells a different story about what contributes to an inclusive recovery. Each recovered during different periods between 1980 and 2013, and, during their recovery periods, they improved on both economic and racial inclusion relative to the other cities in the sample. Appendix C provides a fuller picture of how these improvements fit within the city's political, economic and cultural contexts. In this section, we elevate lessons from a combination of conversations with local leaders, desk research, and a two-day convening in which we gathered national and local experts from city government, community groups, philanthropy, and research (see appendix D).

Though there is no single model for success that arose from these case studies and all of the cities we studied have room to improve on all aspects of inclusion, they each provide valuable insights on inclusive growth. We identify the following common elements of an inclusive recovery and important implications for practice:

- Adopt a shared vision.
- Inspire and sustain bold public leadership.
- Recruit partners from across sectors.
- Build voice and power.
- Leverage assets and intrinsic advantages.

- Think and act regionally.
- Reframe racial and economic inclusion as integral to growth.
- Adopt policies and programs to support inclusion.

The first three implications are common characteristics of efforts to build economic resilience and recovery. City economies can recover without moving the dial on inclusion. Improving racial and economic inclusion during an economic recovery requires intentional efforts to elevate the voice of residents, policies that remove barriers and close gaps, and new narratives that bind growth and inclusion together. Though each American city has a unique economic, social, and political context in which policies and practices may fail or flourish, the following insights provide suggestions for integrating principles of inclusive recovery in a variety of cities and contexts.

Adopt a Shared Vision

Creating space early on to adopt a shared vision for an inclusive recovery can drive future progress. In many of our case study cities, leaders acknowledged the importance of having a widely accepted vision for their city's recovery that includes inclusion goals. Though these visions can come in many forms—some are established via a formal plan and others arise from resident or community groups—buy-in from multiple local actors is critical. Columbus and Lowell provide examples of the important foundational role planning can play in driving overall inclusion, even when these plans do not contain inclusion as an explicit goal.

In Columbus, comprehensive planning has a long history, including a citywide plan in the 1970s that created and integrated 40 neighborhood-specific plans. This occurred in the period leading up to the city's economic recovery in the 1980s. By the 1980s, Columbus "saw a renewed interest in comprehensive planning" as development decisions became too difficult to make on an ad-hoc basis since the city had become so large (City of Columbus 1993, 2). This brought area commissions, civic associations, and businesses together to promote land-use planning. In the mid-1980s, the city began developing the *Columbus Comprehensive Plan*, the most important element of this process being a Community Involvement Program. This program was designed to offer every segment of the Columbus community a chance to participate in the plan's development. A community advisory committee was created, made up of representatives of area commissions, neighborhood business associations, civic councils, and other interested citizens who initiated and reviewed work from a neighborhood perspective.

The business community in Columbus also showed a strong commitment to comprehensive planning, which persists to this day, especially for the downtown region. According to one local expert, the business community (with support from then mayor Michael B. Coleman) contributed to reducing crime in the Short North area and better connecting the central business district with the economic hub around Ohio State University.¹²

In Lowell, the establishment of a nonprofit economic development organization in 1980 called The Lowell Plan helped coordinate planning efforts and create a neutral ground where public and private leaders could speak candidly and collaborate on priority issues. The Lowell Plan convened city leaders in business, government, education, and community development to strategize about urban revitalization and goals for the future. Through the Plan, the City undertook feasibility studies, from which they created community amenities, such as sports stadiums, as well as a successful marketing plan to increase Lowell's reputation as a destination city.¹³ Although the organization was not representative of the community and the Plan did not explicitly adopt inclusion goals, it spurred small business growth, including the creation of the Small Business Assistance Center that has supported the establishment of over 400 immigrant- and minority-owned small businesses. The Lowell Plan still operates today and includes a civic engagement program for residents, planning for downtown's future, and continued marketing campaigns.¹⁴

These examples suggest approaches that could be replicated elsewhere. In Columbus, the planning process before and during its recovery was driven by strong collaboration with the business and civic communities. In Lowell, the creation of an organization that created a platform for communitywide discussion may have helped to pave the path toward racial and economic inclusion. These types of planning processes could be taken one step further by more explicitly ensuring that those creating the plans represent the community as a whole and that the process itself is inclusive of all community members (Metzger 1996).

Inspire and Sustain Bold Public Leadership

Bold leadership is essential to generating and sustaining inclusive recovery strategies. Leadership can take many forms, often sparked by committed public officials who then work in tandem with or are succeeded by other dedicated stakeholders in the community who carry the vision forward.

In Lowell, it took the bold vision of Lowell native and then congressman Paul Tsongas to “resurrect” the postindustrial city; he is credited with making Lowell a destination city in its own right—distinct

from Boston—with various attractions, including a national historic park, a minor-league baseball team, and new schools, businesses, and jobs.¹⁵ Other political leaders also helped to move racial inclusion forward in Lowell, such as then governor Dukakis who adopted a state law that made all state agency services available and accessible to Massachusetts’ growing refugee population. This policy, which arose out of the leadership of Kitty Dukakis, “played an important role in the process of Cambodian immigration to Lowell and demonstrated the influence that an individual and their actions have had in the development and growth of a Cambodian community” (Foster 2012, 33).

Similarly, in Columbus, Maynard “Jack” Sensenbrenner served three terms as mayor from the mid-1950s to early 1970s. Though his time preceded the city’s recovery (from 1980 to 1990), Sensenbrenner’s administration more than doubled the size of Columbus by annexing inhabited and uninhabited unincorporated land in surrounding Franklin County, which laid the groundwork for later population and economic growth. In the new millennium, Mayor Coleman served a record-breaking four terms as the first African American mayor beginning in 1999 and guided Columbus’s growth through two national recessions.¹⁶ He also adopted a neighborhood approach to development that has helped to revitalize and reconnect some of the city’s poorer neighborhoods to its economic hubs.¹⁷ Mayor Coleman’s charisma and leadership carried a vision of overall inclusion through his own term and laid the groundwork for the work to continue.

Whether a city has a strong mayor or strong city manager may not matter for a city’s approach to inclusive recovery. Examples of strong leadership can be found in either form of city government (Svara and Watson 2010). The strength, quality, and vision of the leadership is more important than form. Further, as these examples illustrate, political leadership (such as mayors or Congressional representatives) are important in the process, but they are just one form of leadership that carries the vision forward. Other civic leadership is often an important driver for economic growth and helps to ensure that it is built on a foundation of inclusion (Liu 2016). Having engaged community members and constituent organizations at the table helps to sustain the vision that overall inclusion and growth can happen together.

Recruit Partners from across Sectors

Diverse partners are instrumental in carrying inclusion forward. Representatives from our case study cities recognized that gains in both racial and economic inclusion were driven not only by strong public-sector leadership but also because of active and long-term engagement with partners from across

sectors. Partners such as resident groups, the media, civil rights organizations, and business leaders all help to implement shared visions of inclusive growth.

In Columbus, the Columbus Partnership launched in 2002 to bring together over 60 CEOs to strategize and work toward sustained economic growth and community development in the city. The Partnership's stated goals include "catalyzing civic improvement" by engaging with projects and organizations that typically struggle with capacity and funding, such as those in the arts, culture, education, or community development areas (Corrigan et al. 2005). During Columbus's recovery during the 1980s and 1990s, business leaders came together to revitalize High Street near downtown and improve the city's housing stock. This coalition of leaders helped lay the foundation for the Partnership.¹⁸ Today, the Partnership collaborates with city government, anchor institutions like the Ohio State University, and philanthropic groups on a range of projects focused on economic and racial inclusion, including programs to improve public education and increase access to college.¹⁹

In some cities, unlikely partners like the local media are crucial for carrying a vision of inclusion forward. In Louisville, the *Courier Journal* helped elevate a public debate about the city-county merger on its editorial page and champion its potential to drive inclusive outcomes. Newspapers help shape local policy agendas by raising certain issues to prominence, evaluating the impact of key developments, and holding public officials and institutions accountable (Mead 1994). Media and other independent local institutions can also help sustain public commitment to implement inclusive growth plans through changes in political leadership.

In Louisville, civil rights and equity-oriented organizations also helped hold city leaders accountable and guide some of the capital investments that came out of the merger to be more inclusive. The Louisville Urban League, a civil rights organization, deployed an apprenticeship program for minorities working on a bridge revitalization project to better physically connect the city and county.²⁰ The organization's commitment to promoting minority-hiring standards continues today, and the practices it promoted for the construction of a new arena downtown are held up as an example for the state of Kentucky that "minority inclusion does work."²¹

In Lowell, nonprofit organizations including the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association have been instrumental in carrying a vision of racial and economic inclusion forward. This association is owned by the members of the Cambodian community of Lowell and works to improve the quality of life for Cambodian Americans and other minorities and economically disadvantaged people in Lowell through educational, cultural, economic and social programs. This group has helped to make Lowell inclusive of its Cambodian population and give them a voice in city decisionmaking.

The research literature reinforces the importance of cross-sector engagement in fostering inclusive growth in cities. Single-sector approaches to addressing new and evolving urban problems are not always successful, especially when these decisions involve only the city government, in part because of mistrust of government actors.²² Cross-sector collaborations can result in more informed decisionmaking and make a greater impact because they address diverse interests (Intersector Project 2016). To the extent that cross-sector partnerships incorporate residents' voices, a vision for the city can better reflect diverse interests and help to keep public and private actors accountable.²³

Research suggests that collaboration can also unlock new resources for implementation. For example, public-private partnerships have gained popularity to fund both public infrastructure projects and social service programs (Corrigan et al. 2005). Particularly in cities facing fiscal austerity, public-private partnerships can provide resources to spur economic and community development and leverage limited public funds.²⁴ This partnership tool can help business communities use their private capital to facilitate work on challenges such as prekindergarten–12 education, the skills gap, entrepreneurship, and infrastructure investments (Mills 2015). In such partnerships, adopting a shared vision for inclusion is crucial to ensuring that development projects inspire community improvements beyond economic growth by also investing in residents' potential. They may be challenging to establish and sustain, but by having multiple actors involved—government entities to prioritize goals, nonprofit and philanthropic partners to intermediate finances and capacity, and private actors to leverage funds and build external relationships—such partnerships achieve faster progress and greater impact for cities.

Partners such as resident groups, the media, civil rights organizations, and business leaders all help to implement shared visions of inclusive growth.

Build Voice and Power

Building voice and power within communities that have been traditionally underrepresented and disenfranchised drives inclusive outcomes. Inclusive growth is predicated upon building power among historically excluded groups and disinvested communities. It is imperative for diverse stakeholders to be brought to the table to sustain a broadly conceived vision for a city's recovery.

Louisville's merger with Jefferson County illustrates how building and sustaining power for excluded communities is essential. At the outset of the city-county merger discussions, there was a fear that African Americans would be underrepresented in the city's new political structures, having previously been the majority in the city's governing body (Wachter 2013). Pressure from the NAACP and other civil rights organizations resulted in an agreement to redraw council district lines after the merger. The University of Kentucky's department of geography helped redraw council district lines after the merger to create majority African American districts in the city and respond to concerns of reduced African American representation (Hagan 2009). Now, the racial makeup of representatives in the merged government closely approximates Louisville's population—the city's share of African American representatives and its share of African American residents both hover around 23 percent.²⁵ By being mindful of the risk that such a merger could pose to hard-fought wins for the African American community in terms of representation, the architects of the merger were able to build a system that maintained African American representation. Another effect of the merger was deepened local accountability through an increase in the number of council districts so that councilmembers went from representing more than 200,000 residents to between 25,000 and 30,000 residents.

In Lowell, efforts to build power and voice have focused on the integration of the city's Cambodian immigrant population, which is the second largest in the country. This integration effort has been led by the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, which was founded in 1984 as a resettlement agency for Cambodian refugees but now provides a broad range of services for immigrants from multiple countries. The Association promotes civic engagement through a variety of programs, including its citizenship preparation classes and voter registration and turnout drives.²⁶ Even with these efforts to improve civic engagement among immigrants in the city, Lowell's political leadership remains mostly white and does not reflect the city's diversity. All council members in Lowell are elected at large, which dilutes the voting power of wards with high shares of immigrants and people of color. But efforts by the Association and others are heartening: Rady Mom was elected to the state legislature in 2014 and was the first Cambodian-American to serve in such a role anywhere in the country.²⁷

Scholars who argue that building voice and power across communities of color and immigrants is essential for sustaining economic growth substantiate the need to build voice and power within communities as an important element of racial inclusion (PolicyLink and Marguerite Foundation 2016). When there is an imbalance in power between native-born white residents and immigrants, the agency of immigrants is constrained in both political and economic spheres (Hochschild et al. 2013). The disenfranchisement of immigrants can limit the economic success of cities. But creating a welcoming environment for immigrants can stem population decline in cities with stagnant or declining economies,

help revitalize distressed neighborhoods, and support innovation, as Cambodians in Lowell and Somalis in Columbus demonstrate (Ruther, Tesfai, and Madden 2016; Tobocman 2014). Immigrants are also crucial for labor market participation and are linked to future economic growth,²⁸ suggesting that forward-looking cities, as illustrated in Lowell, would be wise to attract immigrants and to actively engage with them as community members.

Likewise, ensuring that communities of color are represented in planning and political processes is crucial for the future success of cities. An important goal for cities is “descriptive representation,” or ensuring that city leadership aligns with the demographics of the residents. As seen through the cautionary tale of Ferguson, Missouri, where primarily white leadership held power over a majority African American town, having fair representation helps with political engagement and ensures that the government best understands the needs of the community to address social issues in a more collaborative rather than contentious way (Shanton 2014).

Leverage Assets and Intrinsic Advantages

Each city has something distinct to offer; taking stock of existing community assets and leveraging them can support an inclusive recovery. Cities often possess unique attributes that can drive inclusive growth. These assets might be physical, such as a city’s environmental endowments or features of the built environment, or they may be tied to the people who live there and their untapped human capital potential.

For Lowell, this meant redeploying the run-down textile mills, which were abandoned in the first half of the 20th century, for the community’s benefit.²⁹ Instead of tearing down these historic buildings, the city chose to invest in establishing a National Historic Park combined with residential units, office space, and a pedestrian path to the Lowell Riverwalk.³⁰ These amenities helped Lowell become a regional tourism destination, and the mixed-use complexes, including arts space, also served residents’ needs. Lowell’s other resource, the Merrimack River, has also been used to support an inclusive recovery: the city’s significant southeast Asian immigrant population hosts a festival on the river annually to celebrate Lowell’s water resources. This festival is now in its 20th year and draws over 60,000 visitors from around the country to Lowell, thus bolstering its economic growth via tourism while celebrating the rich cultures of its many immigrants.³¹

Midland’s natural endowment—its location on the Permian Basin, which produces more barrels of oil than any other petroleum-producing basin in the country³²—has reinvigorated its economy and

created high-paying jobs for low-skilled workers and healthy tax revenues. Midland leaders have taken some steps toward further leveraging this natural endowment to promote overall inclusion by investing in education to attract long-term residents and address its human capital shortage.³³ To do so, local foundations came together to leverage their collective resources to establish a free tuition program for students graduating from the Midland Independent School District to attend University of Texas of the Permian Basin or Midland College. Called the Midland Legacy Scholarship, the tuition fund reinvests boom-time bounties to ensuring that more of Midland's high school graduates attend college.³⁴ However, an important next step for Midland and other communities with tremendous stores of natural resources is to consider additional ways to reinvest these assets into future value for the community and next generation of residents (Barbier 2002). This would help to ensure stability for the city's future inclusion when oil extraction winds down. The Eagle Ford shale area, which is 400 miles to the east of the Permian Basin, is a cautionary tale of the boom-to-bust cycle of oil extraction. Oil and natural gas is incredibly volatile, and when it disappears or becomes too costly to extract, the residents who remain face a challenging economy and livelihood with few other opportunities left behind.³⁵

The academic literature underscores the importance of communities leveraging existing assets to build a sustainable economic future (Liu 2016).³⁶ In some communities, existing assets may take the form of infrastructure and location, the diversity and drive of the residents, or the natural resources or environment upon which it sits. Lowell has demonstrated its appreciation of both its infrastructure and population as an asset for economic development. For example, the creative placemaking literature documents the connections between fostering an arts and cultural cluster, as Lowell did in its former mills, with improvements in quality of life and economic development achieved by attracting tourists, a strong workforce, and businesses (Dwyer and Beavers 2011; Markusen and Gadwa 2010). Research supports Lowell's view of their immigrant communities as an asset for economic growth. High numbers of foreign-born residents in a city are associated with greater productivity for US born residents in those communities (Ottaviano and Peri 2006).

Ensuring that communities of color are represented in planning and political processes is crucial for the future success of cities

Anchor institutions, such as the University of Massachusetts-Lowell and Ohio State University, are important employers for the community as well as natural partners for city leadership to carry out

community and economic development visions (Kleiman et al. 2015). However, anchor institutions can also cause the displacement of residents if anchor-based development does not have sufficient community involvement (Silverman, Lewis, and Patterson 2014). A few of our case study cities have strong anchor institutions that played a role in the planning and development processes in these cities. But many other cities with anchor institutions did not see commensurate gains in inclusion. This suggests that it is not just the existence of an anchor that is important, but the level with which that anchor involves the wider community in decisionmaking.

Think and Act Regionally

Cities can forge connections to the surrounding regions to secure broadly shared prosperity. Cities' prosperity and overall inclusion are often linked to the areas around them. Job and housing markets spill across jurisdictional lines and residents often live, work, and access services outside their city. For people of color, the experience of fragmented and isolated governments is made significantly worse by persisting segregation and issues of affordability; in such circumstances, excessive commute times, food deserts, and poor schools are common (Sadler and Highsmith 2016).³⁷ Fragmented regions, with multiple governments working in isolation, can slow economic growth, lead to fiscal disparities, and impede service delivery (OECD 2015; Silverman, Lewis, and Patterson 2014). Though regional action is not an easy proposition, it is an important component of inclusive recovery in cities. For the case study cities, regional partnerships, formal or informal, were critical for success. These partnerships involved deliberate and concerted efforts to strengthen the city's role in the region across a range of issues, including economic development, political representation, and education.

Louisville's merger in 2003 is a prime example of formal regional action and successfully heightened the city's position within the region (Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2002).³⁸ The merger catapulted Louisville from the 65th to 23rd largest city in the nation, which increased the city's stature in the state (Foster 2001). The merger supported economic growth too, as the city and county could present a united front in courting franchises and other business headquarters. Louisville also used their merger as an opportunity to support regional inclusion through capital investments that connect neighborhoods across the region and create jobs for residents. For example, an overhaul of the bridge connecting Jefferson County to East Louisville utilized minority-hiring standards and apprenticeship programs.³⁹

Lowell's proximity to the greater Boston metro region offers an example of informal regional thinking that can yield positive economic outcomes. This proximity promoted a connection to the strong

labor market of the Boston area while allowing the city to develop its own identity. Lowell's identity as a city with "strong civic infrastructure" was cited as a key factor that drew regional investment there and continues to be important today. For example, Lowell was recently awarded a significant grant from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston designed to promote cross-sector collaboration to tackle multigenerational poverty in one of its poorest neighborhoods.⁴⁰ Additionally, because of their proximity to Boston, Lowell residents benefit from many employment opportunities in the tech and health sectors. Consequently, the city has focused on building out transportation options between Lowell and Boston to strengthen these connections and foster opportunities for its residents.⁴¹

In the end, there is no right way to build a regional vision or collective consensus and governance. Context matters. Whether and how a city pursues a formal or informal approach to working regionally will depend on a variety of political, economic, and cultural factors (Pain 2008). Regardless of approach, sustained discourse and planning around a host of social issues and policy concerns that benefit the collective rather than the needs of a few can contribute to enhanced economic growth for all in that region (Benner and Pastor 2015).

Reframe Inclusion as Integral to Growth

When cities embrace principles of economic and racial inclusion as part of their growth strategies, progress in both areas is heightened. Economic recovery and inclusion, both economically and racially, do not have to operate in separate realms. Framing inclusion as part and parcel with growth prioritizes investments that serve both and create more impact.

Two examples illustrate this reframing nicely. Lowell's Southeast Asian Water Festival, staged by a collaboration of various Southeast Asian immigrants residing in the city bolsters the civic pride of immigrants and residents. It also spurs economic activity by attracting tourists to the area, further underscoring the external value of immigrant cultures. Louisville has found that its historic efforts to desegregate the public schools and maintain diversity have also been positive for its recovery.⁴² By maintaining diverse schools, Louisville has been able to maintain its tax base, as residents are not hollowing out the city by relocating for schools. At the same time, the policy helps to better integrate residents socially. Such social cohesion has positive effects on crime alleviation that in turn creates a better business environment (Hirschfield and Bowers 1997).

Research shows that the economic future of cities rests squarely on the quality of its human capital and increasing workers' productivity (Berry and Glaeser 2005). Recent research demonstrates negative

links between structural economic and racial isolation and regional economic mobility (Chetty et al. 2014; Sharkey 2013). Some have even argued that diversity of population and an area's acceptance and tolerance of others is a catalyzing factor that drives economic development and growth.⁴³ For example, a recent Urban Institute study region found that if Chicago could reduce its level of economic segregation to the average level of the 100 largest commuting zones, African American per capita incomes would increase 12.4 percent, educational attainment rates for both African American and white residents would increase 2 percent each, and the city's homicide rate would drop 30 percent (Acs et al. 2017).

Adopt Policies and Programs that Support Inclusion

Deliberately crafting policies and programs that promote racial and economic inclusion contributes to long-term progress. The literature suggests several ways in which policies and programs can be building blocks for inclusion. Through our case studies, we explore how the following four general areas—education, housing, economic development, and fiscal policy—can lay a potential policy foundation for inclusive recovery.

Education Policy

Louisville has made tremendous strides in school integration since 1975, when the US Supreme Court ordered the city's school district to integrate schools, initially through busing. The battle has been long and hard fought but has led to important progress. Today, the school district is one of the most integrated in the nation and the educational achievement gap between whites and people of color is among the lowest in our sample of cities.⁴⁴ The city's longstanding commitment to school integration has also strengthened social capital in the city and has contributed to collaboration across racial and ethnic groups in other realms like economic development.⁴⁵ More recently, local foundations in Louisville came together to launch "55,000 Degrees," a college attainment program aimed at adding 40,000 bachelor's degrees and 15,000 associate's degrees to its labor pool by 2020 in an effort to increase regional economic and labor force competitiveness.

Midland also offers a college attainment program in which any student graduating from Midland Independent School District receives free tuition at Midland College and at UT Permian Basin.⁴⁶ This ambitious effort is supported by the city's foundations, which reinvest money from the city's oil boom toward the area's human capital development. Although not specific to Midland, the Texas Permanent

Fund is also another example of a program that can promote inclusion across all students. The Texas Permanent Fund is a trust started in 1854 that preserves a share of the proceeds of natural resource extraction and land usage in an endowment for the benefit of the state's public schools.⁴⁷

Though state and federal policies can set many of the educational standards that local areas follow, cities have strategies and policy levers that they can pull to help reinvest and level the playing field. Strategies that cities can employ to close the education achievement gaps include preparing teachers for increasingly diverse classrooms, increasing the share of teachers of color, boosting funding and directing it to poorer students, and focusing immediately on closing the reading achievement gap (Gallagher and Chingos 2017). Most cities' public-school budgets remain strongly tied to state and federal funds and revenue from local property taxes (Leachman et al. 2016). But, creative solutions, like public-private partnerships, can generate funds to provide services to the benefit of disadvantaged students in schools that lack generous funding streams.⁴⁸

Housing Policy

The availability of affordable, high-quality, and well-located housing is a crucial factor in fostering inclusive communities. Both Columbus and Midland continue to face rising housing costs as their recoveries progress, and both have called on community groups to help solve this problem. These groups include nonprofit cross-sector collaborations and affordable housing providers in both cities. The Columbus-area group Move to PROSPER, a collaboration between The Ohio State University and community partners, provides rental relocation opportunities for low-income families with children to move to high-opportunity neighborhoods.⁴⁹ Rebuilding Together brings community volunteers in Midland together to fix the homes of low-income residents who cannot afford the improvements on their own.⁵⁰ In Midland, the volatility of the oil market makes both the price and availability of housing especially erratic (Office of Policy Development and Research 2015), so insulating their lowest-income residents from these fluctuations is especially important through either local programs or state and federal assistance.⁵¹

Other cities experiencing economic recovery in more recent years have experimented with innovative models to preserve affordable housing while land is still relatively cheap. For example, many cities have adopted Community Land Trusts (CLTs) to ensure permanent affordability of housing units, especially when market conditions begin to change and displacement of long-term residents is a concern. Though none of our case studies currently have CLTs, adjacent cities in all four states are experimenting with this model, which could be applied to low-income, yet rapidly gentrifying

neighborhoods to preserve permanent affordability for low-to-middle income residents who can find themselves priced out of the real estate market. Though CLTs are but one tool in the housing policy toolbox to ensure affordability, they offer an example of how cities could promote programs and policies to ensure they remain inclusive.

The availability of affordable, high-quality, and well-located housing is a crucial factor in fostering inclusive communities.

Economic Development Policy

In some cities, economic development policies are developed in conjunction with inclusionary practices addressing racial and economic disparities, and, in other cities, renewed economic success for some underscores that not all residents were full participants in the recovery. Lowell is an example of how economic development policies and inclusion may be woven together. Lowell understood that the Cambodian immigrants who settled there in the 1980s offered considerable economic potential to the city and invested in the community, including English as a Second Language training and funding and technical capacity assistance for nonprofits. Recognizing the importance of tourism as an economic booster, the city supported the community's development of the Southeast Asian Water Festival in 1997, which now draws tens of thousands of tourists every year.⁵² Efforts for inclusion of the Cambodian immigrant population into economic development planning continue today. Recently, the city, prompted by the Cambodian community, invested in creating a "Little Cambodia" district as a place where small businesses can flourish and food tourism is a draw.⁵³ There are lessons in valuing immigrants' unique perspectives and contributions for other communities who are seeking to boost their economies to create welcoming policies and programs.⁵⁴

Louisville's economic development policies evolved from a more singular focus on renewing the economy to incorporating more explicit racial equity and inclusion policies. Louisville transformed itself into a high-performing city through dedicated economic development efforts in the 1980s and 1990s. These efforts started to meet the needs of existing corporations (e.g., GE and UPS), and developed to expand its manufacturing and innovation base and draw new business (like Yum! Foods). Later, efforts included incubating small businesses and entrepreneurs and growing the human capital skills of the city's and region's labor force. Though the push for greater economic equity for the city's African

American residents has always existed, the momentum of recent economic development efforts helped. For example, when UPS invested heavily and redeveloped its WorldPort in Louisville in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a share of contracts were reserved for African American businesses. Recent efforts to boost human capital skills in Louisville, notably through college degree attainment through the 55,000 Degrees initiative, have an explicit target of 15,000 African American residents receiving a college degree by 2020 to improve labor market outcomes.⁵⁵ This meets a larger economic development goal of a highly educated workforce that can draw new industry and incubate new business, something that will likely be a key factor among cities that thrive in the coming decades (Berube and Holmes 2016; Dirks, Gurdgiev and Keeling 2010).

Fiscal Policy

Smart fiscal policies can be an important lever in promoting an inclusive recovery. In Columbus, one of the most powerful fiscal policy levers for inclusive recovery has been the use of the Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) program and associated tax incentives. In the 1970s and 1980s, redevelopment of the Short North neighborhood was sparked by individual investors. Developer Sanborn Wood was credited for seeing potential in the neighborhood decades ago and using federal historic rehabilitation tax credits to purchase and rehabilitate properties, which, in conjunction with artists moving there, began to draw people to the area.⁵⁶ From the 1990s to the present, the city capitalized on Ohio's CRA program and started designating various neighborhoods, including the Short North, as eligible for multiyear property tax incentives to residents and businesses in exchange for investments and rehabilitation (Kenyon et al. 2017). Through this form of fiscal policy—tax incentives for reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods—the momentum of early investors in various downtown neighborhoods has become institutionalized through CRA incentives. In fact, the Short North neighborhood has become so successful that some now suggest that the CRA and associated tax abatements only benefit wealthier residents and developers, to the detriment of inclusion.⁵⁷ The CRA continues to be an important fiscal policy lever to revitalize other historically disinvested neighborhoods, even if it is no longer needed in the Short North.

Another strategy in Columbus was the utilization of water and sewer lines to annex adjacent outlying communities. By combining a freeze on service extensions so that unincorporated areas had to petition the city for annexation with offering service contracts to municipalities in surrounding Franklin County, Columbus doubled its land area in only a few years (Benner and Pastor 2012). The city also included growth corridors in these annexation deals so that the central city could expand, which kept

more jobs in the city. Its annexation policy allowed the city to combat white flight out of the city to exclusive suburbs and preserve tax revenues from those upper- and middle-income families.

In Louisville, fiscal policy was a driving motivation for the merger of the city with Jefferson County (Wachter 2013). In the decade following the merger, government expenditures declined slightly and stabilized over time because of fewer government employees and streamlined departments. Furthermore, in keeping with their promise during the campaign for the merger that neither city nor county residents would face tax hikes once the government was consolidated, property tax rates declined for residents overall (Wachter 2013). The merger also contained government costs during an era where other cities have increased expenditures and have raised revenue through increased fees for services (McFarland and Pagano 2017). By changing the population size and composition through the merger, Louisville also indirectly changed its fiscal base. Its new fiscal base draws upon residents that have comparatively more resources and thus enables the city to leverage more or the same amount of revenue while keeping the tax rates in check. This is important for more disadvantaged residents who tend to use more city services and may otherwise be burdened when cities increase taxes and fees to cover services. Achieving an equitable balance is a fundamental issue for cities' fiscal soundness because they also need to keep their more advantaged residents.⁵⁸ Thus, an indirect benefit of the merger for Louisville's fiscal policy is that it changed the demographics of its tax base and inadvertently created more equilibrium between the demand for city services and the revenue generated from residents.

Conclusion

To shed light on what it takes to recover from economic distress in more inclusive ways, this research identifies cities that diverged from their peers and harnessed their economic recovery to support more broadly shared prosperity. During this period, few cities demonstrated strong intentions to build more inclusive economies, and yet we find that more than half of the cities that experienced an economic recovery made measurable progress on inclusion. Today, there is much more national and local interest in blending economic growth with economic and racial inclusion goals. Shared prosperity and inclusive economic development are elevated as goals in mayoral races but also within the business community at the local and regional levels.

This research provides a long view of what it takes to move the dial on racial and economic inclusion. The lessons learned validate the importance of building voice and power into economic recovery efforts, allocating resources more fairly, and designing policies that remove structural barriers to opportunity. Today there are new tools to support cities that have elevated inclusion as a goal and new networks of city leaders that are advancing these practices and policies. Yet more needs to be done to understand the impact of new practices, policies, and approaches to supporting inclusive growth and recovery in cities across the country.

This research challenges assumptions about which cities have been building more inclusive recoveries. Wolman, Hill, and Furdell (2004) illustrate that cities can influence the perceptions of their economic recoveries through media and other strategies, but “rhetoric does not often meet reality” when the data are analyzed. Representatives from our case study cities were surprised that they had made progress on racial and economic inclusion relative to their peers. It was not necessarily the story that they had been telling about their individual cities. This observation underscores the importance of monitoring inclusion measures as policies and processes of growth are adopted. Evidence suggests that monitoring data and indicators on a real-time basis can help to improve city outcomes (Allwinkle and Cruickshank 2011; Hancke, de Carvalho e Silva, and Hancke Jr. 2013; Townsend 2013). Measures that are made public allow for public oversight and accountability.⁵⁹ Selecting inclusion metrics to monitor over time would help city leaders and their partners understand inclusion goals and keep them in mind as priorities shift. And, these inclusion metrics should be selected in collaboration with the community. An inclusive process of choosing inclusion metrics ensures that they are measuring the correct outcomes and that community members feel ownership over their success.

The lessons learned validate the importance of building voice and power into economic recovery efforts, allocating resources more fairly, and designing policies that remove structural barriers to opportunity.

Looking ahead, cities that integrate ways to monitor the impact of their economic and racial inclusion efforts will accelerate their progress and contribute to a broader field of urban practice. As this research illustrates, not all cities have made intentional progress, and, for some cities, economic conditions changed and prosperity was more widely shared. However, sustaining this progress toward more shared prosperity requires intentional effort, transparency, and policies.

Appendix A. Indicator Calculations and Selection

In this appendix, we detail our indicator calculations and selection and discuss the literature on which these selections were made. Table A.1 displays each indicator, its definition, calculation, what it is designed to measure, examples of its use in previous literature, and how to interpret it. We then go through each index and describe each measure and why it was selected. Except racial segregation, all of the indices are calculated using data from the US Census Bureau's 1980 Decennial Census, 1990 Decennial Census, 2000 Decennial Census, 2006–10 American Community Survey, and 2011–15 American Community Survey. These data were obtained through the online portal NHGIS (IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org).

TABLE A.1
Index variables

Variable	Definition	Calculation	Designed to measure	Examples	More healthy/ inclusive when measure is
Economic health					
Employment change	Percentage change in number of people in the labor force employed from 10 years prior (13 years for 2013)	(# people employed in current decade - # people employed in previous decade)/# people employed in previous decade	Growth in employment	Shearer et al. 2017; PolicyLink and PERE 2016; Benner and Pastor 2015	Higher
Median family income	Median family income in the past 12 months	\$ median family income	Relative prosperity of families	de Souza Briggs, Pendall, and Rubin 2015; Benner and Pastor 2015; SRRRI 2005	Higher
Unemployment rate	Percentage of labor force not currently employed or actively seeking employment (excluding military)	# unemployed/# in labor force	Conditions of labor market	Yellen 2013; de Souza Briggs, Pendall, and Rubin 2015; SRRRI 2005	Lower
Vacancy rate	Percentage of housing units that are for sale or rented/sold but unoccupied	# vacancies ^a /# total housing units	Conditions of housing market	Cunningham and Droesch 2005	Lower
Economic inclusion					
Income segregation	Rank-order information theory index on a scale of 0 to 1	Computation of segregation between families above and below each income distribution bucket at the census tract level. These are then averaged (weighted by income comparative to the median income) to construct the city-level measure.	Spatial income segregation	Reardon and Bischoff 2011; Bischoff and Reardon 2013	Lower

Variable	Definition	Calculation	Designed to measure	Examples	More healthy/ inclusive when measure is
Rent burden	Percentage of renters who pay 35% or more of their income in rent	# renters paying over 35% of their income on rent/total renters	Housing cost burden	PolicyLink and PERE 2016; Schwartz and Wilson 2008; JCHS 2017	Lower
Working poor	Percentage of families that are below the poverty line with householder working full-time	# families below the poverty level with a householder or spouse that worked full-time year-round in the past 12 months/# families	Economic insecurity	PolicyLink and PERE 2016	Lower
Percent 16- to 19-year-olds not in school	Percentage of 16- to 19-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates	# not enrolled or school and non-HS graduates ages 16–19/# total population ages 16–19	High school drop-out rates	Ross and Svajenka 2016; PolicyLink and PERE 2016	Lower
Racial inclusion					
Racial segregation	Person of color/white (non-Hispanic) dissimilarity index	$(1/2) * ((\# \text{ people of color in census tract} / \# \text{ people of color in city}) - (\# \text{ non-Hispanic white in census tract} / \# \text{ non-Hispanic white in city}))$	Spatial racial segregation	Logan and Stults 2011; Benner and Pastor 2012	Lower
Homeownership gap	Percentage of white households that own a home minus the percentage of person of color households that own a home	$(\# \text{ non-Hispanic white in owner-occupied units} / \# \text{ non-Hispanic white in occupied units}) - (\# \text{ people of color in owner-occupied units} / \# \text{ people of color in occupied units})$	Racial disparities in access to capital and wealth building opportunities	PolicyLink and PERE 2016; Ranieri and Almeida Ramos 2013	Lower
Poverty gap	Poverty rate for person of color population minus the poverty rate for person of color population	$(\# \text{ people of color below the poverty line} / \# \text{ people of color}) - (\# \text{ white below the poverty line} / \# \text{ white})$	Racial disparities in economic deprivation	Pew Research Center 2016 ; Shearer et al. 2017; PolicyLink and PERE 2016	Lower
Racial education gap	Percentage person of color population (older than age 25) with a high school degree or more minus the percentage white	$(\# \text{ white HS graduates} / \# \text{ total HS graduates}) - (\# \text{ people of color HS graduates} / \# \text{ total HS graduates})$	Racial disparities in education	Chapman et al. 2011; Child Trends 2015	Lower

Variable	Definition	Calculation	Designed to measure	Examples	More healthy/inclusive when measure is
	population (older than age 25) with high school degree or more				
Percentage of color	Percentage of population made up by people of color	# people of color /# total population	Demographic diversity	PolicyLink and PERE 2016	Higher

Source: Steven Manson, Jonathan Schroeder, David Van Riper, and Steven Ruggles, "PUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 12.0 [Database]" (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2017), <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V12.0>.

^a Consists of vacant for rent, vacant for sale only, rented or sold not occupied, and other vacant. Seasonal, recreational, occasional, or migratory use are not considered vacant in our analysis.

Economic Health

The research literature tends to converge on a limited set of indicators to measure economic health in cities that focus on employment (labor force participation rate [OECD 2016]), unemployment rate (PolicyLink and PERE 2016), change in the number of jobs; income or wages (aggregate [PolicyLink and PERE 2016], per capita [PolicyLink and PERE 2016] or median [PolicyLink and PERE 2016]); or productivity (gross metropolitan product [Shearer et al. 2017], aggregate or per capita).⁶⁰ Some studies—particularly ones focusing on a specific region—also include customized indicators that use locally available data to measure the quality of the business environment, such as the number of loans to small businesses or number of new businesses opening per quarter (de Souza Briggs, Pendall, and Rubin 2015), and innovation, such as venture capital investments or patents issued per capita (Benner and Pastor 2016a).

Because of availability and applicability across geographies, we chose not to incorporate these more bespoke indicators. To avoid issues of endogeneity, we also selected inclusion-neutral inputs to growth; that is, we aimed to separate measures of inclusion as much as possible from pure growth measures.

Change in employment over time is a standard measure for job growth in a specified area. Benner and Pastor (2015) use change in employment as a defining economic indicator to show the existence of regional economic differences and as a component of their growth index. Shearer et al. (2017) also include change in employment within their index monitoring economic growth. PolicyLink's and PERE's National Equity Atlas (2016) tracks job growth over time, as well.

We use median family income as an indication of families' relative prosperity within each city. Benner and Pastor (2015) also utilized median household income as their static economic well-being metric. Sacramento Regional Research Institute (2005) similarly included median household income in their analysis of prosperity within Sacramento.

We elected to use family rather than household income (here, as with our income segregation measure) as the family is, generally speaking, the typical economic unit. Whereas family financial decisions are made jointly and level of income can better gauge their economic outlook, households group individuals to a greater extent who do not share joint finances.

Finally, our last measure of economic health is unemployment rate. A highly salient metric, Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen (2013) has cited unemployment rate as the “best single indicator of

labor market conditions.” Unemployment is widely addressed in analyses throughout the literature measuring economic growth (de Souza Briggs, Pendall, and Rubin 2015; SRRRI 2005; PolicyLink and PERE 2016).

We included vacancy rate to capture local housing market conditions. Vacancy rate is used rather than monthly rent or home sales value as it tends to be the first input to shift in a changing market.⁶¹ A low vacancy rate corresponds to a housing market in high demand. Vacancy rate can also signal desirability of a location (Cunningham and Droesch 2005).⁶²

Economic Inclusion

The research literature reveals greater divergence on how to measure economic inclusion than economic health. Because definitions of inclusive economies generally correspond to a specific conceptual orientation to the work, indicators chosen to measure economic inclusion vary widely. Earlier studies can be roughly divided into those that focus on fairness and inclusivity in inputs and those that focus on inclusive outcomes. Because of data limitations, we were not able to focus on inputs to inclusivity, such as political participation (Benner and Pastor 2016a) and access to health care (Lawson et al. 2017) and instead focus on outcomes.

In terms of outcomes, earlier definitions emphasize labor market participation and growth (Spaulding and Johnson 2016)⁶³ instead of economic security and the strength of safety nets.⁶⁴ In our effort to separate dimensions of economic health from inclusion, for the former we opted, to the extent possible, for indicators that track economic growth in local economies.

We do not include poverty rates or income inequality in the economic inclusion index. We exclude measures such as the percentage of the population in poverty in this index, since a lower poverty rate may indicate that lower-income residents are being displaced from the city rather than included in its recovery. To the extent possible, we aim to avoid the scenario in which a city’s index score improves by displacing low-income and other marginalized populations in our analysis.

Although many point to income inequality as a measure of inclusion, we do not include common measures of income inequality like the Gini index in our index because a city can be inclusive while having higher income inequality and vice versa. For example, one city may have low income inequality because its residents are all relatively poor while having low levels of inclusion because the city is failing to deliver adequate services or connect residents to jobs. Another city may have high income inequality

even though its lower-income residents are able to benefit from economic growth, access needed services, and achieve upward mobility over time (Stacy, Srini, and Meixell, forthcoming).

In sum, the economic inclusion index prioritizes outcomes and attempts to capture general economic inclusion without benefiting cities that displace or otherwise disadvantage lower-income residents. In compiling our economic and racial inclusion indices, we sought to examine parallel aspects of inclusion across each. With both a racial and economic lens, we addressed spatial segregation, housing, educational attainment, and poverty in our inclusive analysis.

Our economic inclusion index was constructed to analyze the extent to which a city's economic output benefitted all its residents, across the income distribution. Toward this goal, we included four measures: income segregation, percentage rent-burdened population, percent 16- to 19-year-olds not in school, and percentage of working poor.

We chose to measure income segregation via the rank-order information theory index developed by Reardon and Bischoff (2011). This specific metric compares variations in family incomes across census tracts within each city to determine the extent to which that city is segregated by income. Such an approach considers segregation at every level of income distribution and easily allows for geographic and temporal comparison.

Rent burden is a common measure for housing affordability (JCHS 2017; Schwartz and Wilson 2008).⁶⁵ Though studies differ on the percentage of income above which to consider a household rent burdened, we selected 35 percent because of data constraints. An often-cited alternative cutoff is 30 percent; but 35 percent was the 1980 decennial census' lowest cutoff and is what we use here.

Working poor, a measure also reported in the National Equity Atlas (PolicyLink and PERE 2016) is a metric used to capture economic insecurity and poor job quality (Bane and Ellwood 1991; Levitan, Gallo, and Shapiro 1993; Wicks-Lim 2012). Working poor is our preferred metric rather than poverty rate, which many studies use (Benner and Pastor 2015; de Souza Briggs, et al. 2015; Shearer et al. 2017). Especially at the city level, an emphasis on poverty rates could falsely reward municipalities that undertake policies which push their poor residents into suburban jurisdictions. By focusing instead on percent working poor within each city, we instead consider the level to which low-income families can achieve a base level of quality of life.

In our analysis, the percentage 16- to 19-year-olds not in school and not graduated from high school is a proxy for high school dropout rate. This measure is meant to capture city-level service provision (i.e., whether the city is delivering high-quality education to all of its residents at the school level rather than

student level). School-level factors, moreover, have been found to have the greatest impact on dropout rates (Goldschmidt and Wang 1999). This is similar to measures of disconnected youth used in other studies (Ross and Svajenjka 2016; see also PolicyLink and PERE 2016, which use ages 16–24). Disconnected youth differs in that it counts residents neither in school nor working. We elected to instead utilize a proxy for high school dropout rate, as unemployed youth have the potential to be a factor of broader economic health in a locality rather than its levels of inclusion.

Racial Inclusion

A further distinction in the literature is exhibited in studies that emphasize narrowing general economic inequalities⁶⁶ versus those that focus on disparities by race and ethnicity, immigration status, gender, or other group identity (de Souza Briggs, Pendall, and Rubin 2015)—often referred to collectively as “vulnerable” or “marginalized” groups. Studies that focus on economic inequality usually use measures of poverty or income inequality (Benner and Pastor 2016b).

To capture group-based disparities, we create an additional index of inclusion to measure the racial dimensions of disparities. Though gender, national origin, and other identities figure prominently into the inclusion calculus, we decided to focus on racial disparities considering the role that place has played in their creation and continuation (Greene, Austin Turner, and Gourevitch 2017) and because racial disparities are particularly pronounced in the US (Fong 1996; Johnston, Poulsen, and Forrest 2007). However, future studies could investigate the effects of these other identity-based disparities.

We chose to create our disparity measures for non-Hispanic whites versus all other people of color rather than just one race to be inclusive of different types of cities. In some cities, Hispanics outnumber African American residents and face barriers to inclusion that would be missed if we only examined racial disparities between non-Hispanic whites and African American residents. Similarly, in some cities, subpopulations of Asians outnumber other populations of color and face their own unique barriers to inclusion, like in Lowell where Cambodian refugees are a large segment of the population. Using this more inclusive measure of racial disparity helps to pick up these concerns in our indices. Trade-offs exist, however, when, for instance, a city has a large population of people of color from a group who has been less historically marginalized than other populations, and the city therefore shows smaller racial disparities just by the nature of the population. If, for instance, barriers to inclusion are greater for African American populations than they are for Asian populations, then cities with large Asian populations are going to appear to be more racially inclusive just by nature of their racial mix. However,

we believe that the benefits of including measures of disparities for all people of color outweigh this potential negative.

To create these measures of racial disparity, we create parallel measures to the economic inclusion index to measure the difference in outcomes between white residents and residents of color in a city. However, the same measures available for the population as a whole are not always disaggregated by race. For instance, although rent burden is available for residents of a city as a whole, it is not available for non-Hispanic white and people of color residents separately, so we could not include the gap in rent burden as a measure in our racial inclusion index. Instead, we include a measure for the homeownership gap between races, which captures some of the racial differences in housing access and affordability. This is also the case for our education indicator and job-quality indicator. For the former, we substitute dropout rates with graduation rates to approximate similar dimensions of educational attainment. Because working poor measures are not available with race or ethnicity breakdowns, we opted to use the gap in poverty rate. We also include a measure to account for the share of the city's population that are people of color, so that less diverse cities are not favored in the rankings and to capture trends over time that may be contributing to declining (increasing) diversity.

To address racial inclusion, we utilized a racial segregation metric and a series of racial person of color versus white gaps to capture similar areas as addressed in our economic inclusion index. In addition, we included percentage of color to factor in the diversity of each city evaluated. This indicator is especially important in measuring changes in inclusion over time, as a declining share of a city's population who are people of color suggests that changes are leading to displacement. Across all racial inclusion indicators, we compare the opportunities afforded non-Hispanic white residents with those afforded residents of color.

For our racial segregation measure, we utilized a non-Hispanic white/person of color residential dissimilarity, measuring the extent to which people of color and non-Hispanic white residents are equally distributed across census tracts within each city (Logan and Stults 2011). Data were obtained from Brown University's American Community Project.⁶⁷

Homeownership gap was selected over a rent-burden measure considering that disparate homeownership levels significantly contribute to the wealth gap (Rothstein 2017) between non-Hispanic white and populations of color. Homeownership gap was included in the National Equity Atlas (PolicyLink and PERE 2016) and considered by Ranieri and Almeida Ramos' (2013) analysis of inclusive growth.

Unlike in our economic inclusion index, we had to use poverty rate (rather than working poor) as a measure because of data constraints. Both Shearer et al. (2017) and the National Equity Atlas (PolicyLink and PERE 2016) also break down poverty rate by race. Pew Research Center (2016) demonstrates the saliency of the racial poverty gap at national level.

A key measure in the literature on racial disparities in education is the racial gap on “status dropout rate” (the percentage of 15- to 24-year-olds not enrolled in high school and without a high school credential) (Chapman et al. 2011; Child Trends 2015). Because of lack of data availability reaching back to 1980, we had to instead use a non-Hispanic white/person of color gap on the percentage of residents older than age 25 with a high school degree or more to try to capture this dynamic. This is an imperfect measure and includes residents who move into the city despite being educated in a different jurisdiction’s school system.

Appendix B. Top 10 and Bottom 10 Cities by Index

In this appendix, we list the cities from our entire 274 city sample that fared the best and worst on our economic, racial, and overall inclusion indices in 2013. Next to each city is a parenthetical denoting its classification on our economic health index over our 1980–2013 study period.

TABLE B.1
Top and Bottom 10 Cities, by Index

Rank	Economic inclusion index	Racial inclusion index	Overall inclusion index
Top 10			
1	Livonia, MI (H)	Miramar, FL (H)	Fremont, CA (H)
2	Fremont, CA (H)	Daly City, CA (H)	Daly City, CA (H)
3	Bellevue, WA (H)	Fremont, CA (H)	Torrance, CA (H)
4	Naperville, IL (H)	Glendale, CA (H)	Santa Clara, CA (H)
5	Sunnyvale, CA (H)	West Covina, CA (H)	Elk Grove, CA (H)
6	Torrance, CA (H)	Killeen, TX (D)	West Covina, CA (H)
7	Cambridge, MA (H)	Pembroke Pines, FL (H)	Sunnyvale, CA (H)
8	Overland Park, KS (H)	Hialeah, FL (O)	Bellevue, WA (H)
9	Santa Clara, CA (H)	Elk Grove, CA (H)	Carlsbad, CA (H)
10	Carlsbad, CA (H)	Norwalk, CA (H)	Naperville, IL (H)
Bottom 10			
265	Jackson, MS (D)	Huntsville, AL (O)	Miami, FL (O)
266	Memphis, TN (D)	Wilmington, NC (R)	Evansville, IN (D)
267	San Bernardino, CA (D)	Scranton, PA (D)	Grand Rapids, MI (D)
268	Fresno, CA (D)	Grand Rapids, MI (D)	Atlanta, GA (D)
269	Detroit, MI (D)	Fort Wayne, IN (O)	Winston-Salem, NC (D)
270	Shreveport, LA (D)	Duluth, MN (H)	Phoenix, AZ (O)
271	Camden, NJ (D)	Omaha, NE (H)	South Bend, IN (D)
272	Dallas, TX (O)	St. Paul, MN (H)	Houston, TX (O)
273	Laredo, TX (R)	Minneapolis, MN (H)	Shreveport, LA (D)
274	Miami, FL (O)	Sioux Falls, SD (H)	Dallas, TX (O)

Notes: “H” = healthy in 1980, 1990, 2000, 2013; “D” = distressed in all four years; “R” = recovered economically at some point in this time span; “O” = a mix of healthy, distressed, or in between years, but experienced no economic recovery within this timespan.

Appendix C. Case Studies

Columbus, Ohio

Columbus, the capital of Ohio and home to the state's flagship public university, illustrates how a diversified economy, strong anchor institutions and a regional approach to growth can support racial and economic inclusion. During the 1980s when many cities were struggling because of manufacturing decline, employment in Columbus grew. Before this, the city adopted policies that made access to the city's water and sewer services contingent on annexation or service contracts, which led to incremental increases in the city's size and preservation of a strong tax base. A sizeable African American middle class emerged in Columbus in large part because of public-sector employment and, by 2000, Columbus had elected its first African American mayor. The city also has a long history of regional planning and business leadership to support balanced growth and redevelopment. In recent years, the city has adopted policies and programs that attempt to improve transportation connections between neighborhoods and link workers to new jobs in growth sectors like health care, transportation, logistics and professional services.

Data Profile

Our analysis suggests that Columbus experienced an economic recovery between 1980 and 1990, which is the earliest recovery among our case study cities (tables C.1–C.3). During its recovery, the city improved its ranking on economic health compared with other cities in our sample through improvements across all four of our economic health indicators, with notable gains in employment (during a period when most cities in our sample were losing jobs) and significant reductions in the city's vacancy rate.

Columbus also improved 13 rankings in our economic inclusion index and 20 rankings in our racial inclusion index during its recovery period. The city reduced the share of the working families living in poverty and moved its ranking up from 121 to 111 on working poor indicator in the economic inclusion index. Though rent burdens in the city worsened during Columbus's recovery period, cities across our sample witnessed even more sharply rising rent burdens, so Columbus also improved its ranking on this indicator. Columbus improved its racial inclusion ranking by decreasing its poverty gap (moving from a

ranking of 170 to 124). It also achieved modest declines in racial segregation during its recovery—a trend that steadily continued in subsequent periods.

TABLE C.1

Columbus Change in Ranking Analysis for Economic Health

	Percentage employment change	Median family income	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Economic health index	Δ index during recovery period	Δ overall inclusion index during recovery period
1980	152	166	143	228	199	69	19
1990	108	153	100	137	130		
2000	98	126	63	197	127		
2013	146	166	81	210	165		
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

TABLE C.2

Columbus Change in Ranking Analysis for Economic Inclusion

	Income segregation	Rent burden	Working poor	Share of 16-to-19-year-olds not in school	Economic inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period	
1980	230	100	121	136	150	13	
1990	239	82	111	135	137		
2000	221	75	107	104	106		
2013	214	46	144	102	104		
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

TABLE C.3

Columbus Change in Ranking Analysis for Racial Inclusion

	Racial segregation	Homeowner gap	Poverty gap	Education gap	Percentage of color	Racial inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period
1980	221	42	170	78	137	124	20
1990	216	47	124	70	167	104	
2000	198	98	119	41	182	107	
2013	124	143	194	53	179	128	
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

Drivers of Inclusive Recovery

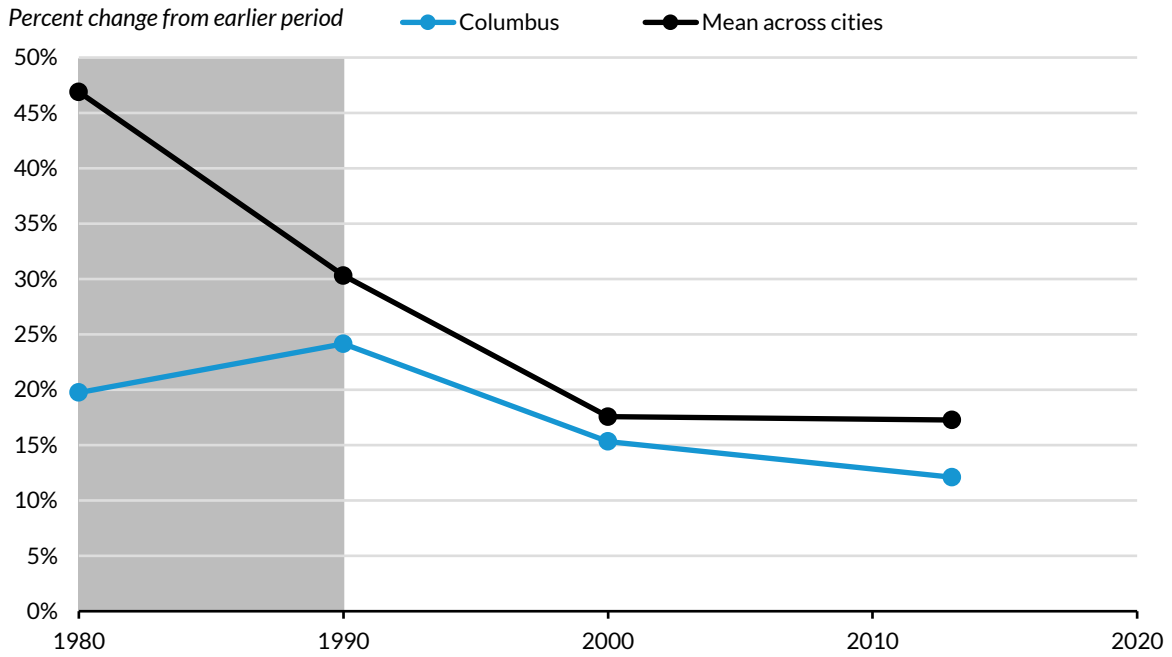
ECONOMIC HEALTH

Columbus experienced economic growth during the 1980s, bucking trends across our sample during this decade, when most cities were losing jobs and witnessing rising unemployment and housing vacancy rates (figure C.1). Experts and historical accounts attribute this to Columbus's diversified economy, its status as a state capital, and the presence of anchor employers, such as universities, hospitals, and government agencies, that could not easily relocate from the city. These anchors buffered Columbus's workforce during declines in the manufacturing sector, which negatively affected Ohio's other largest cities and the wider Midwestern region during the period but could not have the same effect on Columbus given that it never had a strong manufacturing base.⁶⁸ Columbus also established itself as a center for industries like logistics, insurance, and finance.⁶⁹ Most notably, its strong fashion and retail presence with entrepreneurs like Les Wexner (of The Limited brands) growing businesses in the Columbus area during the 1980s (today Columbus is the fourth-largest fashion industry employer in the country) likely contributed positively to its economic resilience.⁷⁰

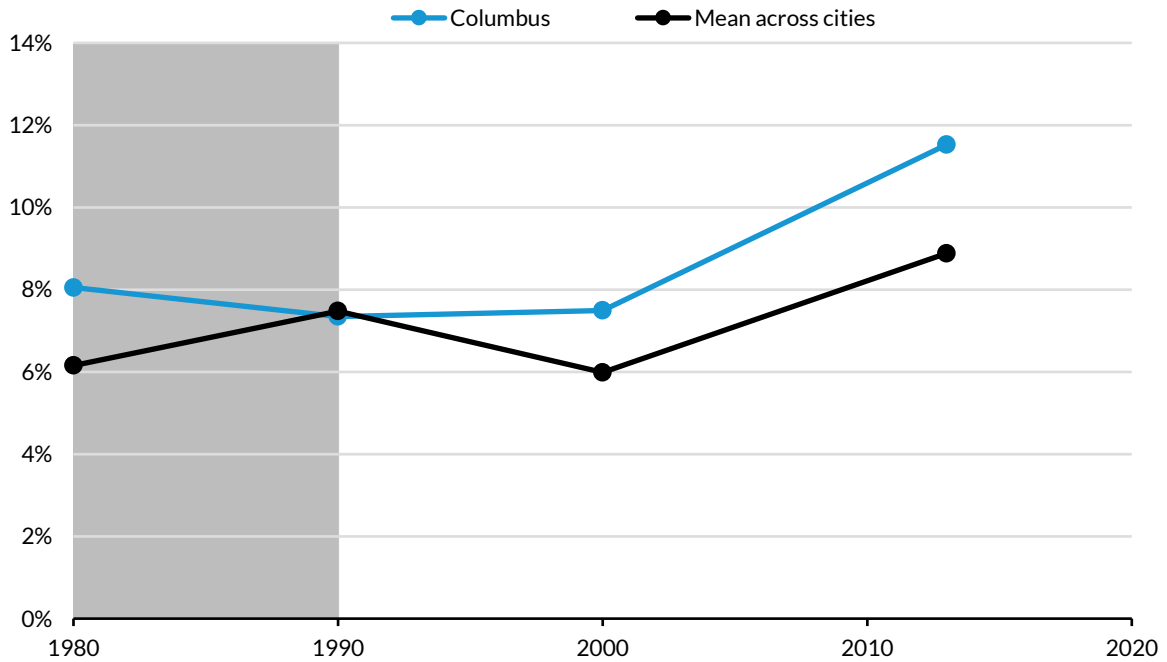
FIGURE C.1

Columbus Economic Health Indicators that Drove Recovery

Employment change



Vacancy rate



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

Columbus also managed to reduce vacancy rates while other many cities suffered from widespread vacancy and abandonment. Several factors likely contributed to this: Columbus's population grew significantly and the city annexed communities in Franklin County with low vacancy rates (although at a slower rate than previous decades). While many neighborhoods in Columbus continued to suffer from disinvestment, the neighborhoods surrounding downtown Columbus experienced a construction boom that included both residential and commercial properties in the 1980s.⁷¹

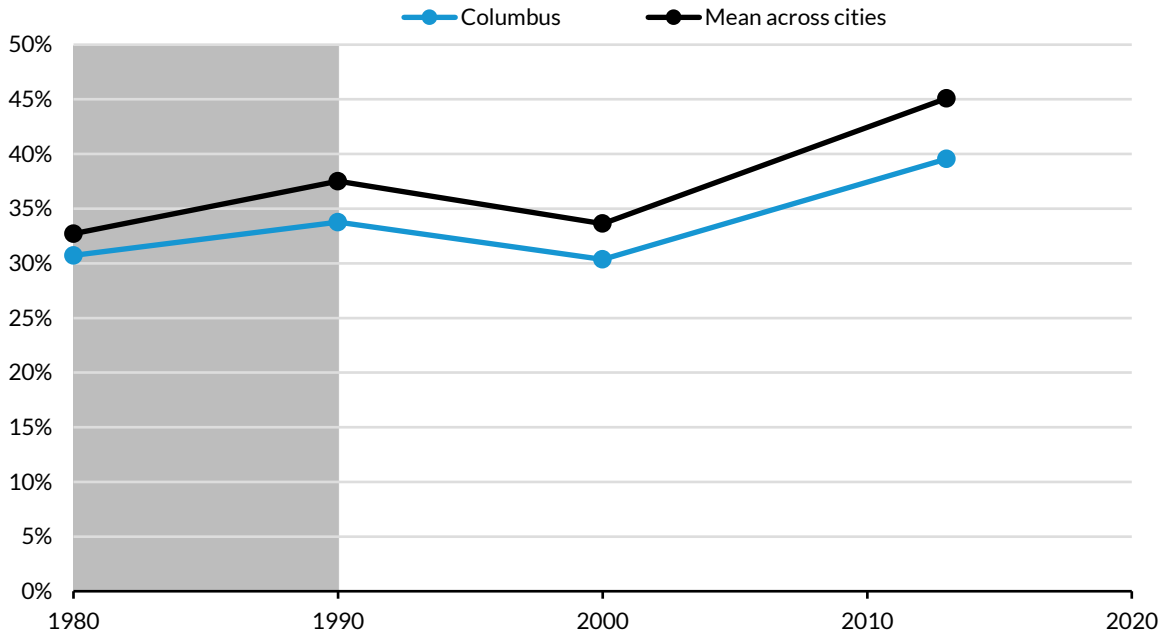
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Columbus's gains in its economic inclusion ranking during its recovery were modest and driven by tempered growth in rent burdens and reducing the share of working families living in poverty (figure C.2). Rent burdens in Columbus increased in the 1980s but at a slower rate than other cities. This was likely because of rising incomes during the period accompanied by an extensive revitalization effort in the historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown that enhanced the desirability of these areas, thus decreasing vacancy rates.⁷² Columbus's reduction in the percentage of its working poor population is likely driven by job growth during this period and the predominance of public-sector jobs that tend to offer higher wages.

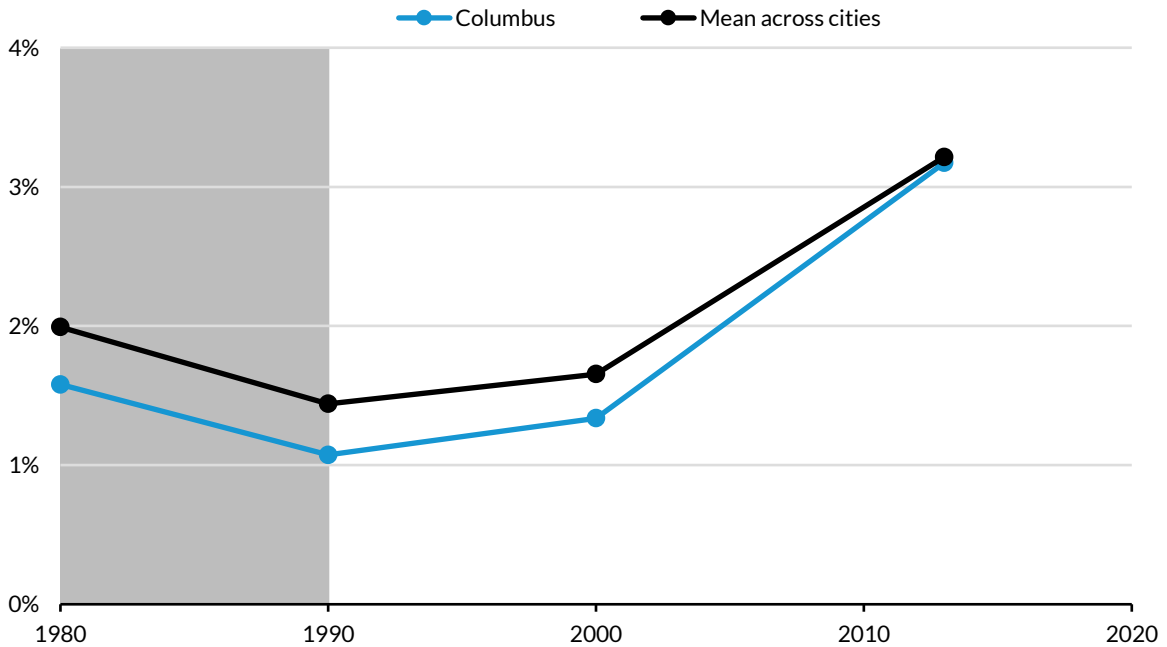
FIGURE C.2

Columbus Economic Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion

Rent burden



Working poor



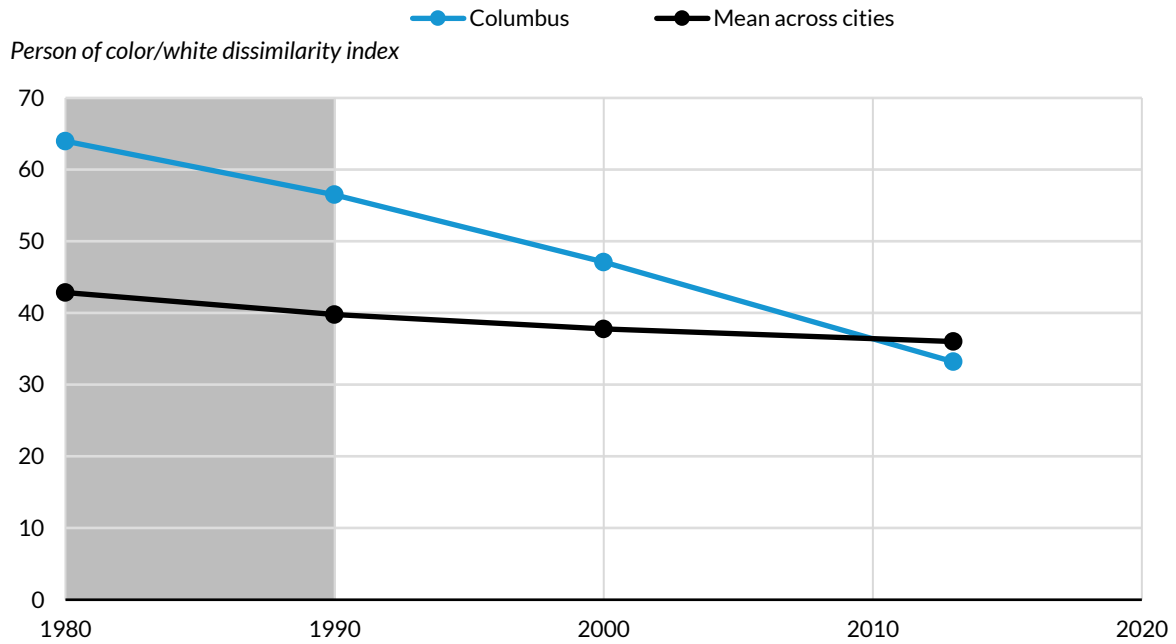
Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011–15).

RACIAL INCLUSION

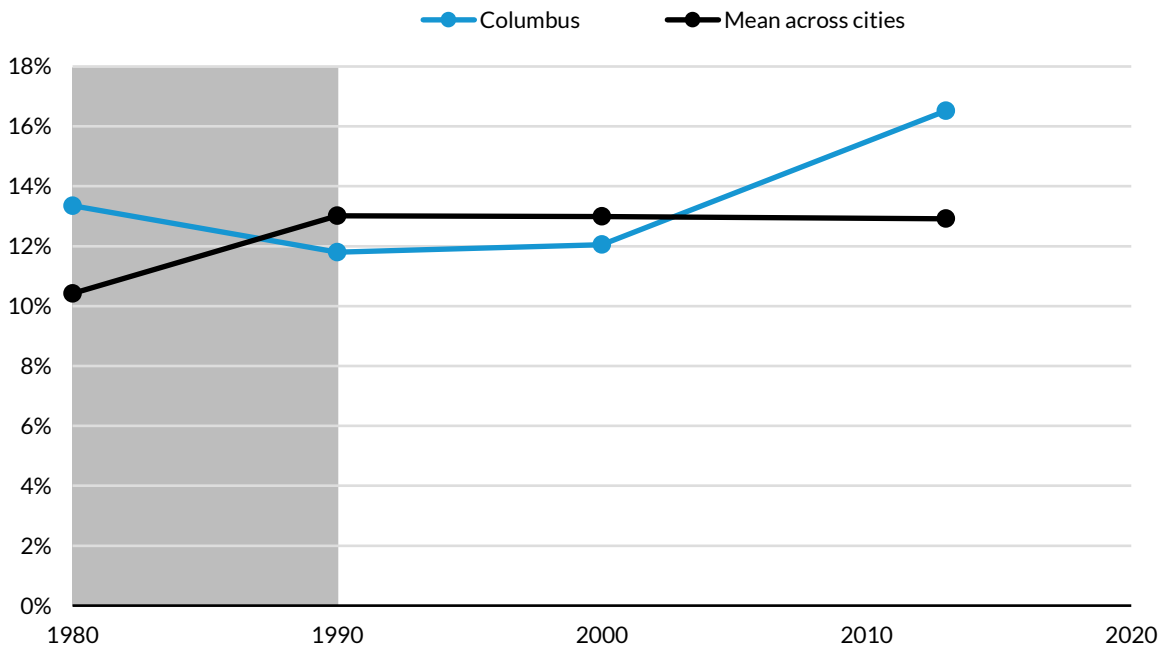
Columbus made more significant gains in its racial inclusion ranking during its recovery, driven by a reduced gap between poverty rates for the city's white population and people of color and declining racial segregation (figure C.3). The reduced racial gap in poverty rates was the result of very modest increases in poverty rates for white individuals accompanied by more significant decreases in poverty for people of color between 1980 and 1990. These trends contrast with those for other cities in our sample during this period when, on average, the gap in poverty rates between whites and people of color was widening.⁷³ Columbus also has a long history of African American church leaders and community development organizations that have focused on improving education, housing conditions, and economic opportunities in African American neighborhoods (Benner and Pastor 2012).

Columbus's reduced racial segregation during this period is likely driven by a combination of factors. New public housing built in Columbus in the 1980s was more dispersed than existing projects in the city (Holloway et al. 1998) In 1979, a federal court ordered Columbus to desegregate schools, which led to a massive busing program in the 1980s. The desegregation order and busing program initially contributed to white flight from the city; however, because Columbus continued to annex suburban communities (without annexing school districts), the city's racial composition remained intact (Jacobs 1998).⁷⁴ Additionally, the previously disinvested areas around downtown, like German Village, Merion Village, and Victorian Village, became newly attractive to white families as the neighborhoods were revitalized.⁷⁵

FIGURE C.3
Columbus Racial Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion
Racial segregation



Poverty gap



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011–15).

Future Outlook

Columbus has recovered from the Great Recession more quickly than other cities in the region and greater Midwest, but it is facing new challenges and opportunities. The city's population continues to grow, driven in large part by the arrival of new immigrants and refugees from Latin America, Asia, and Africa.⁷⁶ Immigrants have helped revitalize distressed communities in Columbus and have driven new job growth through the creation of small businesses.⁷⁷ Though Columbus, like Lowell, was an early adopter of immigrant integration policies and programs, recent arrivals have settled in neighborhoods in the outer belt of the city poorly served by public transportation and disconnected from the city's job centers (Walker and Schemenauer 2014).⁷⁸

The city is being intentional about addressing this transportation gap, most notably via the Smart Cities grant it won from the US Department of Transportation in 2016.⁷⁹ Through a combination of funds from federal, local, and private partners totaling well over \$100 million, Columbus intends to roll out and monitor new transportation technologies, such as autonomous shuttles, universal transit cards, and electric-vehicle infrastructure.⁸⁰ Their Smart Cities plans include an explicit focus on equity, mobility, and access to opportunity; projects began rolling out in 2017, but the success of these initiatives is yet to be determined.

Though Columbus reduced the difference in poverty rates between white people and people of color during its recovery period, that gap has widened in recent years because of rising poverty rates for all, though at a faster clip for the people of color.⁸¹ Along with rising poverty, health disparities across racial and ethnic groups are also growing in Columbus. For example, in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Columbus, the infant mortality rate is four times that of the national average, and the infant mortality rate for African American babies is 2.5 times that of white babies countywide.⁸² The city is prioritizing overcoming this disparity in its public health efforts by distributing cribs for safer sleep, connecting pregnant women with doctors (linking with the Smart Cities initiative to accomplish this), and providing expectant-mother education courses. Despite significant investments, the infant mortality rate still rose in 2016 for all groups (though at a higher rate for non-Hispanic African American babies), which indicates that the city still has more work to reduce such disparities and promote healthier outcomes.⁸³

Finally, experts we consulted from Columbus raised concerns about pathways for low-skilled workers to access jobs in growth sectors in the city. Stakeholders argued that the low unemployment rate in the city masks a trend of underemployment in lower-paying jobs. Part of what has kept Columbus's employment strong is its numerous middle-skill jobs,⁸⁴ but these may be threatened by

automation (e.g., higher-paid semi-skill jobs like trucking could be obsolete within the decade in the face of new technologies).⁸⁵ Moving forward, civic leaders in Columbus will need to create opportunities for apprenticeships and other technical trainings to shift the skill base of Columbus's labor force to reflect the changing, increasingly automated, economy.

Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville, with a population of 609,863 in 2013, is the largest city in the state of Kentucky and is located on the Ohio River, bordering Indiana. Louisville supports a diverse economy. Several Fortune 500 companies with specialties in health care and food and beverage are headquartered there, including Humana and Yum! Brands. The city is also home to the University of Louisville and is the worldwide transit hub for UPS. Notably, the local school district is well known for their long-standing desegregation efforts, dating back to the 1970s. The district defended their integration efforts in front of the Supreme Court, and even after their racial weighting system was ruled unconstitutional in 2007, the district continued their school desegregation, basing it on socioeconomic status, neighborhood, and several other factors.⁸⁶ In 2003, the city of Louisville merged with the surrounding Jefferson County, creating the Louisville/Jefferson County consolidated metro government. The consolidated metro is governed by a mayor-council, with the mayor elected by the metrowide vote and each of the 26 councilors elected by their representative district.

Data Profile

According to our economic health analysis, Louisville experienced an economic recovery between the years 2000 and 2013. Its improved economic health ranking was achieved through an increase in median family income (from a ranking of 233 to 126) and an unemployment rate that, while still increasing, did so at a slower pace than other cities across the country.

Over the course of its recovery period, Louisville improved 63 rankings in our economic inclusion index and 102 rankings in our racial inclusion index. While income segregation slightly increased over this period (ranking of 240 to 249), Louisville improved 78 rankings on rent burden, 90 rankings on percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds not in school, and 91 rankings on percentage working poor over this period. Rent burden and the percentage of working poor were comparative improvements—both worsening but faring better than the average of our 274-city sample. The improved racial inclusion

ranking occurred through a mix of improvement across racial segregation (from a ranking of 263 to 213), education gap (from a ranking of 57 to 26), and poverty gap (from a ranking of 260 to 210).

LOUISVILLE-SPECIFIC DATA

Because of the consolidation in 2003, our census data before 2003 refers to the city of Louisville, and our census data after 2003 refers to the consolidated Louisville-Jefferson County metro. In our analysis, we follow city boundaries as they change over time, which is not uncommon as a result of annexation, consolidations, mergers, and (less often) detachments. However, because we feature Louisville as a case study in this research, we conducted robustness checks comparing census data for Jefferson County in 2000 to the Louisville/Jefferson County metro in 2013 to provide consistent boundaries during its period of recovery and better understand which changes are driven by the consolidation. In many cases, the checks revealed similar findings, but we note where the checks revealed significantly different results.

TABLE C.4

Louisville Change in Ranking Analysis for Economic Health

	Percentage employment change	Median family income	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Economic health index	Δ index during recovery period	Δ overall inclusion index during recovery period
1980	257	236	249	178	252		
1990	247	247	197	180	229		
2000	211	233	171	207	217		
2013	2	126	142	186	4	213	63
Ranking legend	More inclusion					Less inclusion	
Change in rank	Greater improvement			Greater decline			

TABLE C.5

Louisville Change in Ranking Analysis for Economic Inclusion

	Income segregation	Rent burden	Working poor	Share of 16-to-19-year-olds not in school	Economic inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period
1980	242	83	195	251	230	
1990	254	102	217	165	215	
2000	240	131	192	203	220	
2013	249	53	101	112	118	102
Ranking legend	More inclusion					Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement			Greater decline		

TABLE C.6

Louisville Change in Ranking Analysis for Racial Inclusion

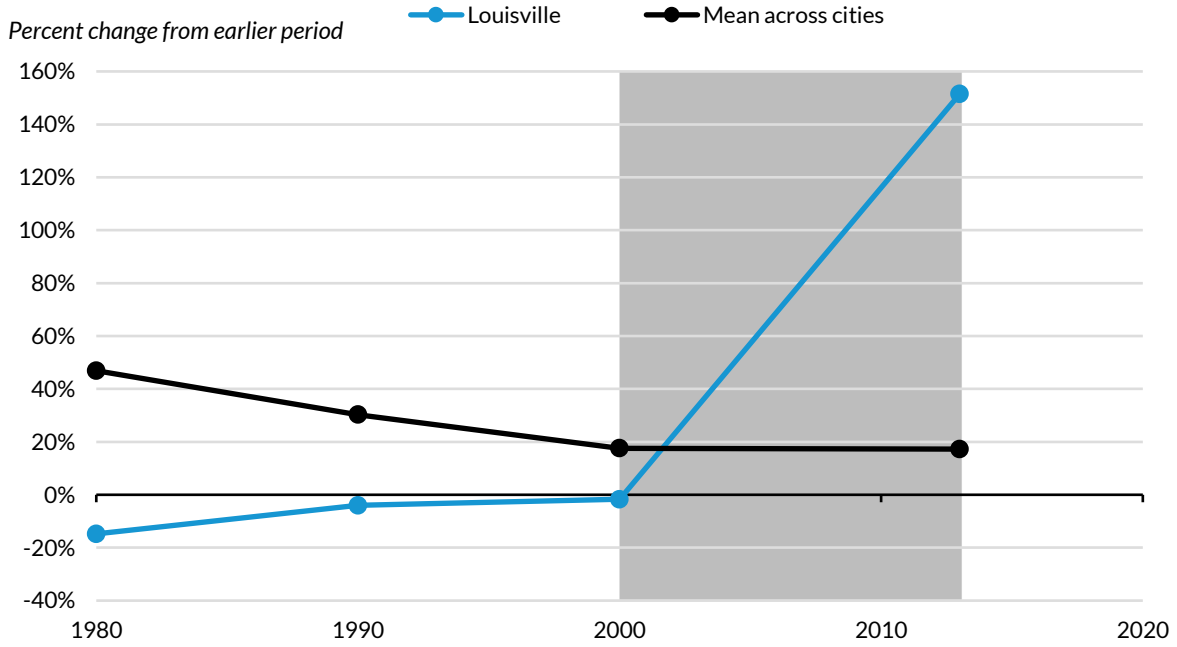
	Racial segregation	Homeowner gap	Poverty gap	Education gap	Percentage of color	Racial inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period
1980	271	132	241	55	179	229	
1990	266	174	235	84	141	242	
2000	263	220	260	57	160	256	
2013	213	259	210	26	216	233	23
Ranking legend	More inclusion					Less inclusion	
Change in rank	Greater improvement			Greater decline			

Drivers of Inclusive Recovery

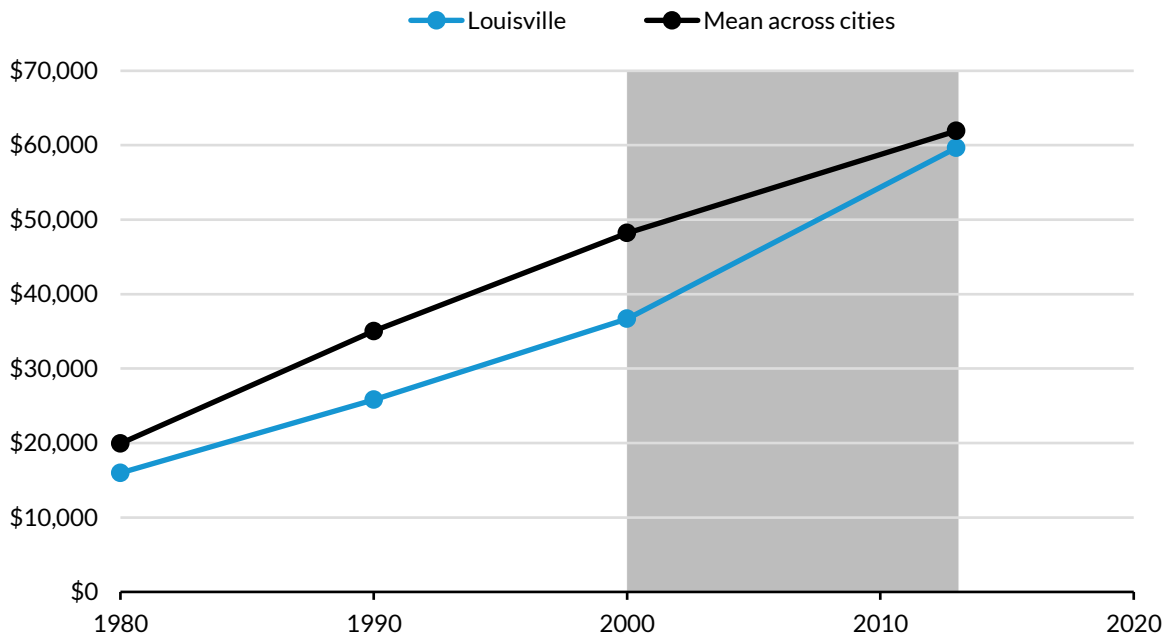
ECONOMIC HEALTH

Our main analysis shows a sizeable increase in Louisville's employment between 2000 and 2013, which was the main driver of Louisville's economic recovery in this period and contributed to it jumping from near the bottom to the top of our sample on overall economic health (figure C.4). However, our robustness check revealed that the remarkable employment growth (and ranking change on this indicator) between 2000 and 2013 was primarily because of the consolidation with Jefferson County. The city added a large number of employed individuals primarily by adding more territory and people.

FIGURE C.4
Louisville Economic Health Indicators that Drove Recovery
Employment change



Median family income



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011–15).

The robustness check suggest that Louisville’s economic growth during the recovery period was much less pronounced than it appears in our main analysis, and it may not have improved enough on its economic health ranking to be considered economically recovered by 2013.⁸⁷ However, our checks also reveal that even when we hold the city’s boundaries constant (using the boundaries for the current consolidated Louisville-Jefferson County metro in both 2000 and 2013), Louisville witnessed significant employment growth and rising median incomes between 2000 and 2013—on both these indicators, Louisville improved not only its raw scores but also its ranking across our sample of cities. Our post-Recession analysis also shows that Louisville witnessed significant employment growth, reduced unemployment and rising median incomes between 2008 and 2013, a period during which boundaries did not change for the city.

Even with the complexities surrounding its economic recovery, Louisville merits its own case study due to its strong improvements in both racial and economic inclusion, which we observe even after holding boundaries constant since 2000 (discussed below). Louisville is also leading with intentional strategies to become less segregated and more inclusive. Aside from the school district integration (which continued after consolidation), the city also explicitly took neighborhood identity and neighborhood demographics into consideration when drawing the new boundaries for the unified Louisville/Jefferson County Metro council. The city brought in the University of Louisville to conduct a study and propose the boundaries, rather than having the new district lines being driven by political consideration.

The consolidation could have proceeded in a way that consolidated political power in a way that diluted the influence of the people of color who primarily lived in Louisville city, but instead, the consolidation led to greater inclusion for residents across the Louisville/Jefferson metro, which is an outcome worth further consideration.

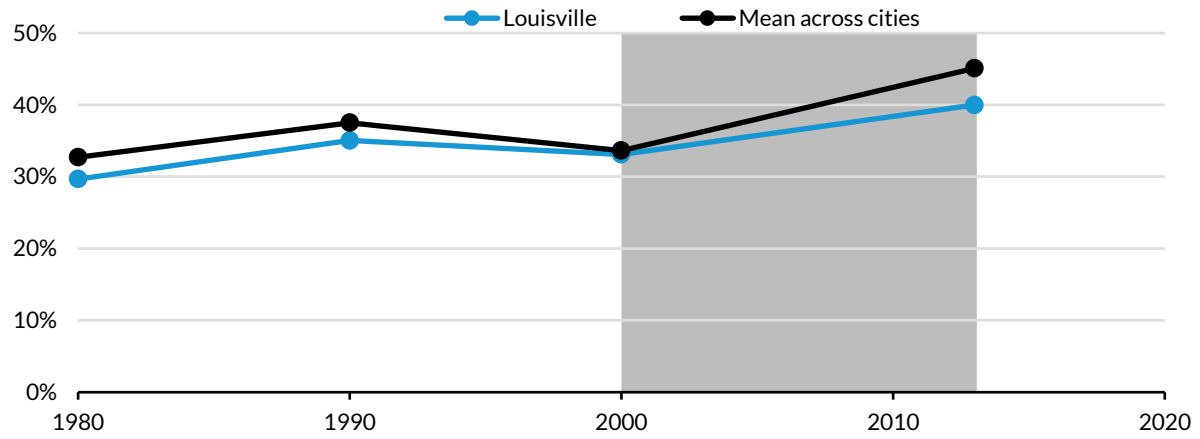
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Louisville made great strides in improving economic inclusion between 2000 and 2013, driven in large part by slower growth in both the share of renters who were cost burdened and the share of working families living below the poverty level than other cities in our sample (figure C.5). During this period, Louisville also reduced the share of teenagers dropping out of high school.

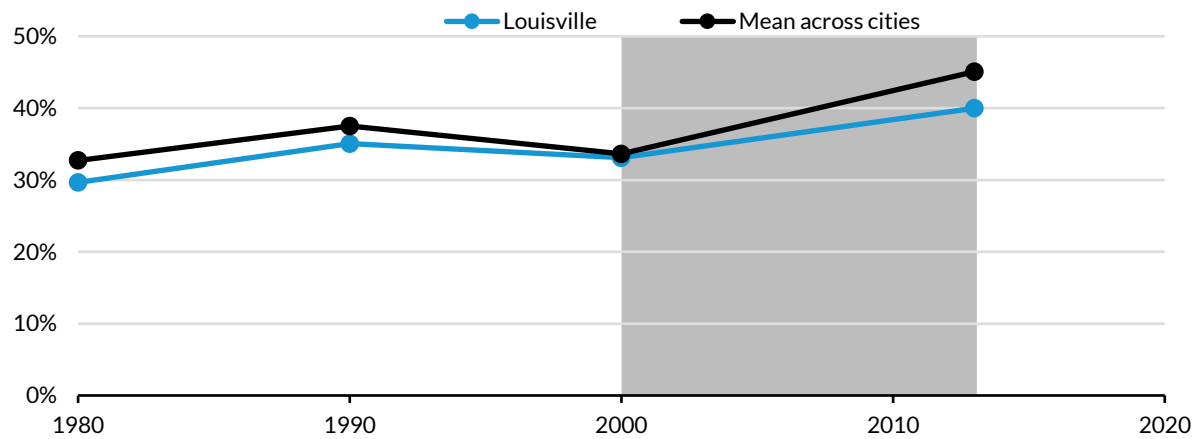
FIGURE C.5

Louisville Economic Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion

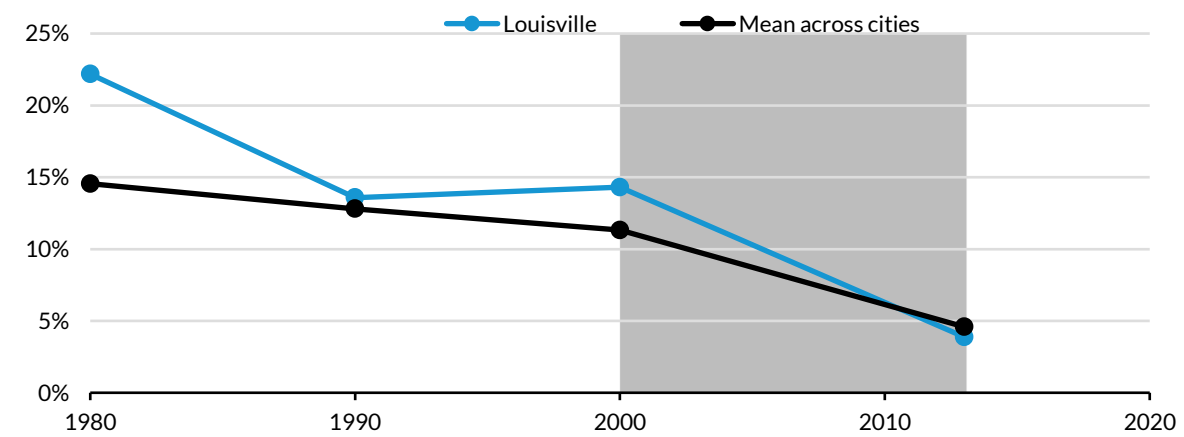
Rent burden



Working poor



Share of 16- to 19-year-olds not in school



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

Rent burdens in Louisville increased more slowly than cities across our sample, and it improved 78 rankings on this indicator between 2000 and 2013. Even in 2000, the average rent burden was low enough to place it in the top half of cities. Though Louisville is among the more affordable cities in the country, the city still took steps to decrease rental burdens and increase the amount and mix of affordable housing.⁸⁸ During this period, the city received two HOPE VI grants to redevelop two housing development sites containing over 1,000 affordable units into redeveloped, mixed-income, mixed-use sites. Though after 2013, the city also recently received a Choice Neighborhood implementation grant of nearly \$30 million to build more affordable and mixed-income development in the Russell neighborhood. Consistently winning these federal grants shows an organized commitment to community development and building affordable housing.

Louisville also reduced high school dropout rates between 2000 and 2013 and did so more dramatically than other cities in our sample. As a result, it jumped 91 rankings on this indicator. Louisville has invested heavily in their school system, working to keep schools integrated both before and after the consolidation and before and after the Supreme Court decision. In 2009 and 2010, the city, civic and business leaders, and Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) came together to create two new programs to improve and advance educational outcomes. The first initiative, Grade Level Reading Louisville, created in 2009 has the goal of getting all students in the school district proficient at reading at grade level. In 2010, the city and business leaders created 55,000 Degrees, a program aimed at increasing the number of Louisville residents with bachelor's degrees by 40,000 and the number of people with associate's degrees by 15,000.⁸⁹ These initiatives work toward better educational outcomes while students are in school and encourage college attendance for people who do complete high school.

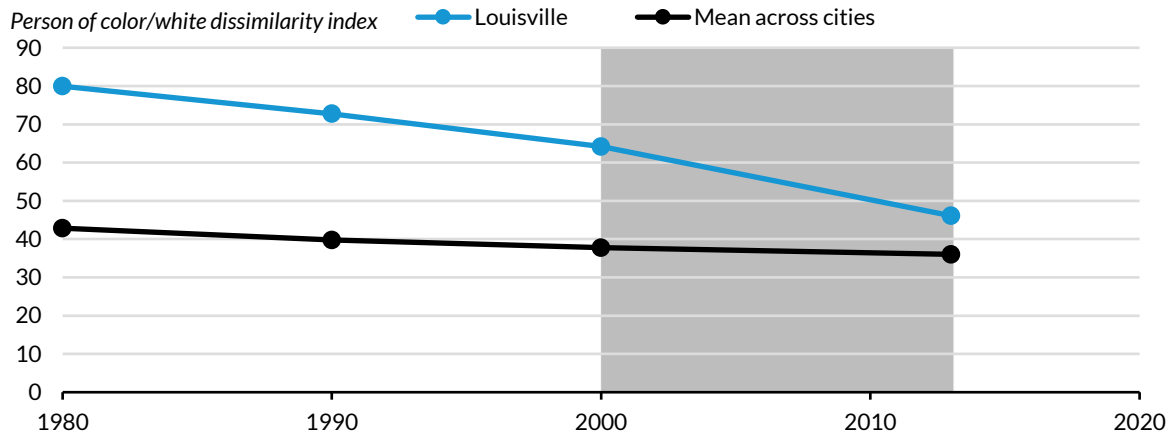
RACIAL INCLUSION

Louisville saw modest gains in racial inclusion during its recovery period, and some of these gains were driven primarily by the consolidation and redrawing of political boundaries (figure C.6).

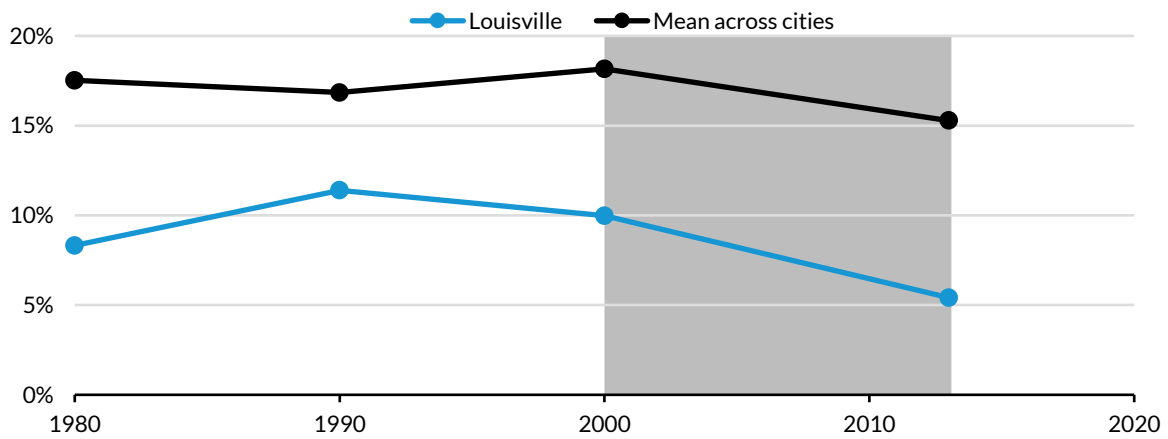
FIGURE C.6

Louisville Racial Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion

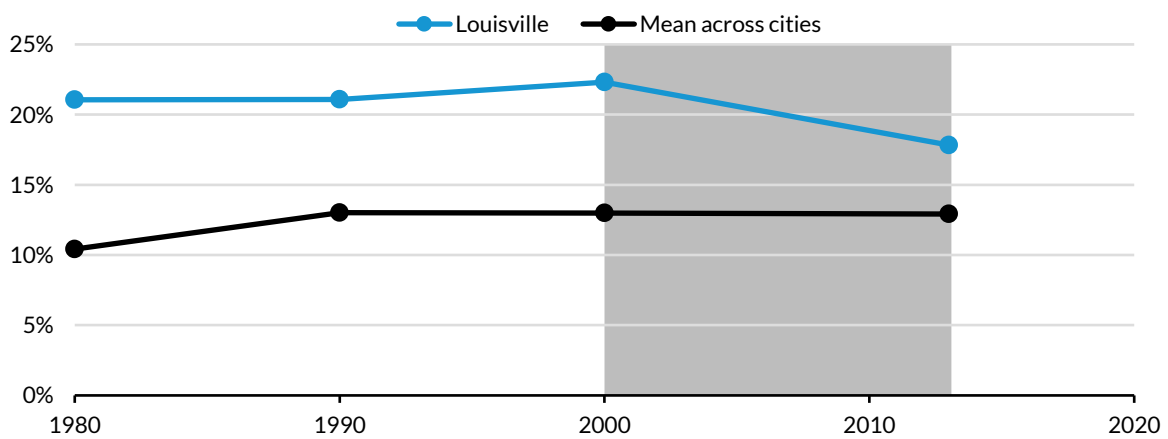
Racial segregation



Racial education gap



Poverty gap



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

The racial education gap for adults in Louisville decreased between 2000 and 2013 in Louisville, resulting in a 31-ranking improvement. Louisville's investments in integrated education were already reflected in the relatively high ranking among cities in 2000, yet the city still improved. The continued decrease in the racial educational attainment is likely because of the sustained commitment to an integrated school district, through multiple challenges during the increased inclusion period. The 55,000 Degrees program also includes several initiative specifically designed to increase diversity among people obtaining higher education. 15,000 Degrees seeks to ensure that 15,000 degrees of the larger 55,000 degree goal are obtained by African American people in the Louisville-Jefferson County metro.⁹⁰ The Hispanic/Latino Initiative at the University of Louisville seeks to increase Latino enrollment and retention at the University of Louisville through scholarships and targeted support.

The racial poverty gap fell during the inclusion period, moving Louisville up 50 ranks. The decrease in the poverty gap was driven by several other factors mentioned here, such as the investments in education, which likely led to improved access to jobs. Additionally, the city invested significantly in economic development throughout the city, including the areas around downtown and the waterfront, such as building the Yum! Center. The development led to increased investments in previously neglected, predominantly African American parts of the city.⁹¹

Finally, the analyses show Louisville increasing 50 rankings on racial segregation over the period between 2000 and 2013, suggesting that the city became less segregated. The robustness check comparing the city and county in 2000 to the consolidating jurisdiction in 2013 shows that racial segregation with constant boundaries remained nearly unchanged, with the dissimilarity index increasing less than 1 percent over that time period.

Future Outlook

Though Louisville became both a more economically and racially inclusive city between 2000 and 2013, the city can still make strides in regards to economic recovery and health. In our original analyses, we found that employment growth resulting from adding the workers in Jefferson County led to an economic recovery. Though the robustness checks complicate those findings, the underlying result is one still worth considering. Increasing the workforce is a pathway and driver to economic recovery and continued economic health. The merged Louisville/Jefferson County added workers over the period, and the metro is explicitly planning to add more through the 55,000 Degrees initiative.⁹² Merging city and county governments can also be a benefit through improved coordination and cooperation among

local officials. Given the complications of a merger, it may not be a solution for many jurisdictions, but the results so far in this suggest the merger only stands to benefit the metro economically.

The city also made significant strides in becoming both a more economically and racially inclusive place over the period. Notably, the metro made more gains in economic than racial inclusion. The metro's economic inclusion gains through declines in rent burden, percentage of youth not in school, and in the working poor suggest that economic development in the metro and the noted efforts of the school district are beneficial to wide swaths of the population. However, though there were gains in racial inclusion, Louisville could still gain further ground. The metro is still relatively racially segregated and still has a wide racial gap in homeownership. Additional efforts to add more affordable housing and make homeownership more accessible to people across the metro could lead to continued racial inclusion in Louisville and continue to bolster its progress as an economically healthy and inclusive city.

Lowell, Massachusetts

Lowell is a city of 109,349 (as of 2013), located approximately 30 miles northeast of Boston. Lowell's economy was driven by textile manufacturing until the mid-20th century, In the 1980s, the city was part of the "Massachusetts Miracle" tech boom, hosting the international headquarters of Wang Laboratories, until their bankruptcy and eventual sale and closure in the 1990s. Now, the city is home to the Lowell National Historical Park and its colleges integrated and became a part of the UMass system. The city is governed by a city council (elected by citywide vote), with the mayor as the head of the city council. The council appoints a city manager, who is the city executive tasked with day-to-day operation of the city.

Data Profile

According to our economic health analysis, Lowell experienced an economic recovery between the years 1990 and 2000 (tables C.7–C.9). Its improved economic health ranking was achieved driven primarily by lowered vacancy rates (moving from ranking 159 to 77) and unemployment rates (249 to 139).

Over the course of its recovery period, Lowell vaulted 31 rankings in our economic inclusion index and 75 rankings in our racial inclusion index. The increase in economic inclusion index ranking occurred because of a large decrease in percentage of the population rent burdened (from a ranking of 193 to a ranking of 63). In this 10-year span, Lowell achieved higher rankings in all five of our racial inclusion

indicators. The most marked improvement occurred on poverty gap with Lowell moving from 252 to 166 among our cities on this metric.

TABLE C.7

Lowell Change in Economic Health

	Percentage employment change	Median family income	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Economic health index	Δ index during recovery period	Δ overall inclusion index during recovery period
1980	195	186	73	117	142		
1990	171	113	249	159	204	85	100
2000	169	146	138	77	119		
2013	168	145	202	102	162		
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

TABLE C.8

Lowell Change in Economic Inclusion

	Income segregation	Rent burden	Working poor	Share of 16-to-19-year-olds not in school	Economic inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period	
1980	60	110	77	137	53		
1990	74	193	48	203	123	31	
2000	79	63	118	217	92		
2013	45	125	47	188	73		
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

TABLE C.9

Lowell Change in Racial Inclusion

	Racial segregation	Homeowner gap	Poverty gap	Education gap	Percentage of color	Racial inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period
1980	142	264	129	127	241	234	
1990	133	267	252	188	181	267	75
2000	105	248	166	153	167	192	
2013	46	169	105	159	145	103	
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

Drivers of Inclusive Recovery

ECONOMIC HEALTH

Computer component manufacturing and software engineering were major drivers of economic success in the 1970s and 1980s, driven primarily by Wang Laboratories, whose international headquarters were located in Lowell (figure C.7). At their peak the mid-1980s, Wang employed over 10,000 people in Lowell, over 10 percent of their workforce. However, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Wang's business suffered, and eventually filed for bankruptcy in 1992, which had a profound impact on Lowell's economy.

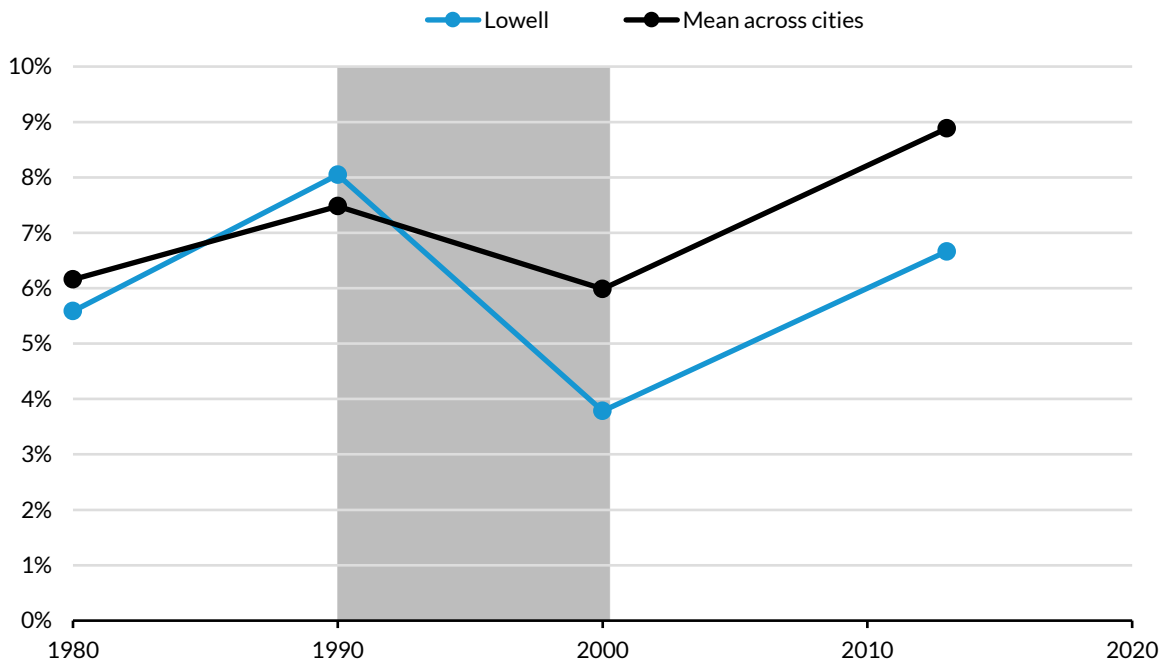
Despite the impact of Wang's loss, the city maintained a base of skilled labor, a national historic park, and UMass Lowell. Efforts from the Lowell Development and Financial Corporation provided low-cost business development loans and The Lowell Plan worked to redevelop the remaining mills and office space left by Wang to be converted into housing and workspace and offices for new businesses. At the same time, many of the refugees and immigrants who had come to the city in the 1980s were settling into the city making inroads into the local labor market and seeing success with their own small businesses.

These changes help explain some of the factors our research found to be key drivers of economic recovery between 1990 and 2000. Lowell's unemployment rate fell sharply during that time, and relative to other cities, moved up 111 ranks. Part of the reason is that Lowell was recovering from Wang's loss, but adding new employers, such as at UMass Lowell, a new campus for Middlesex Community College, and adding other technology focused businesses, such as MACOM, a company that develops radio and microwave technology. The vacancy rate also fell during the period of recovery, driven primarily by the influx of immigration over the decade. By 2000, 22 percent of Lowell's population was foreign born. Though the early wave of Cambodian immigrants during the 1980s set the stage for the influx, over 40 percent of the foreign-born population (primarily from Asian and Latin America) arrived in Lowell in the 1990s (Lotspeich et al. 2003).

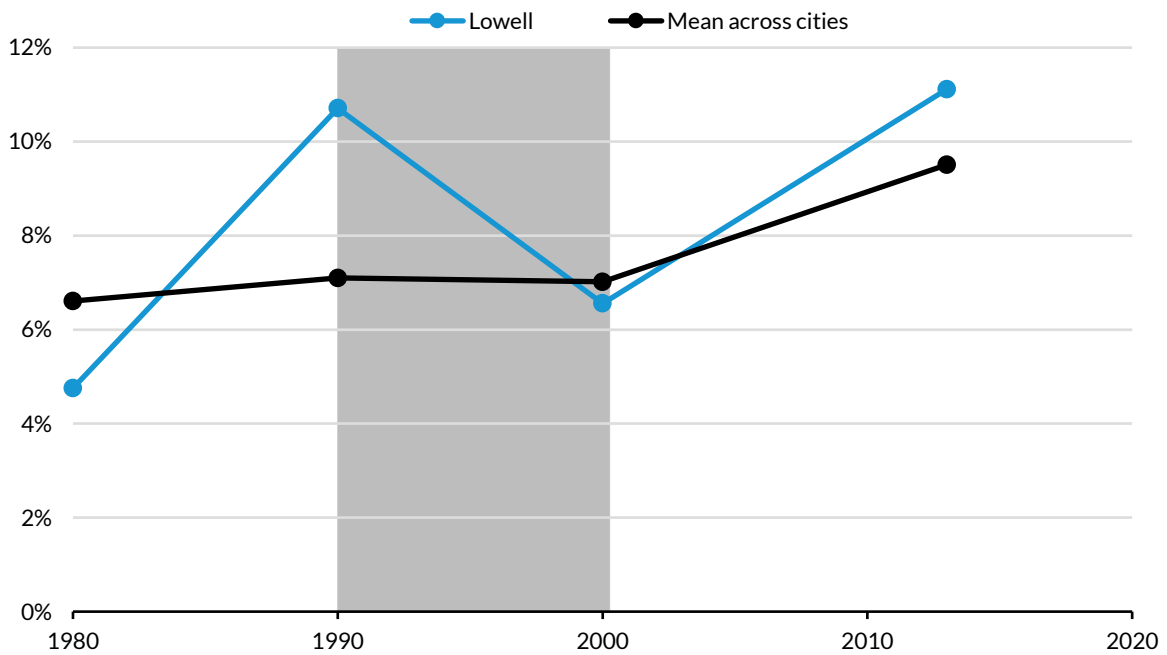
FIGURE C.7

Lowell Economic Health Indicators that Drove Recovery

Vacancy rate



Unemployment rate

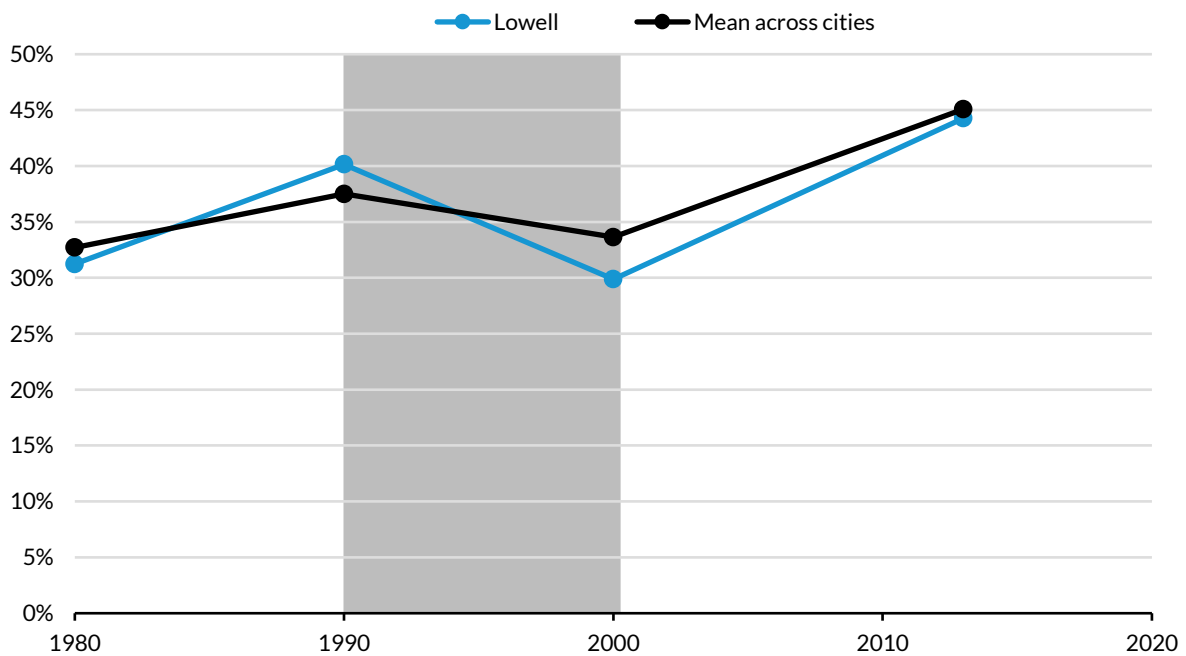


Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

ECONOMIC INCLUSION

For economic inclusion, the key driver of inclusive recovery was the large relative ranking increase in rent burden between 1990 and 2000 (figure C.8). Lowell undertook several steps between the late 1970s and the early 1990s that helped housing become more affordable. Most importantly, in 1978, Lowell established the Lowell National Historical Park, which preserved the city's historic mills for future development. The historic mills provided ready-made infrastructure that could be turned into housing and offices, efforts that were spearheaded by the Lowell Development Financial Corporation and The Lowell Plan in the early 1990s. Additionally, large major employers moved into the city in the 1990s, with the University of Massachusetts converting the University of Lowell into UMass Lowell and building the Tsongas Arena and Middlesex Community College establishing a campus in Lowell. Though there was no major push to build more affordable housing in Lowell during the 1990s, other changes around the supply of housing and the employment of residents helped drive changes to make housing more accessible during their period of recovery.

FIGURE C.8
Lowell Economic Inclusion Indicator that Drove Inclusion
Rent Burden



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011–15).

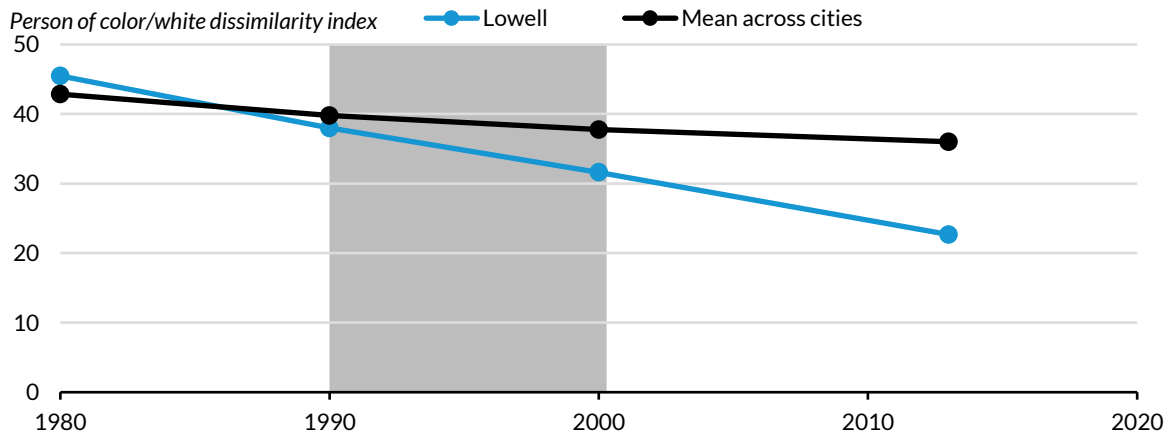
RACIAL INCLUSION

Lowell improved on all five of our indicators for racial inclusion. The percentage of people of color increased in ranking not just between 1990 and 2000, but over the entire observation period. Lowell is home to a large refugee and immigrant population and hosts the second-largest Cambodian population in the United States after Long Beach, California. Cambodians first arrived as refugees in the 1970s and 1980s after the Cambodian-Vietnamese War. Not only did many in the first wave settle and raise families, many friends and relatives followed in the subsequent years. In addition to the Cambodian population, Lowell has a sizeable Latino population, including large numbers of Puerto Rican, Brazilian, and Columbian residents.

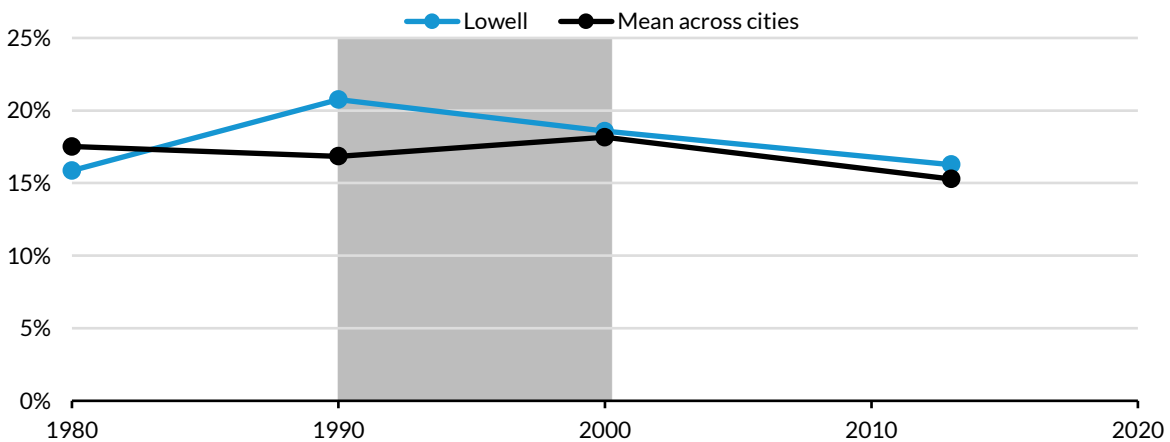
FIGURE C.9

Lowell Racial Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion

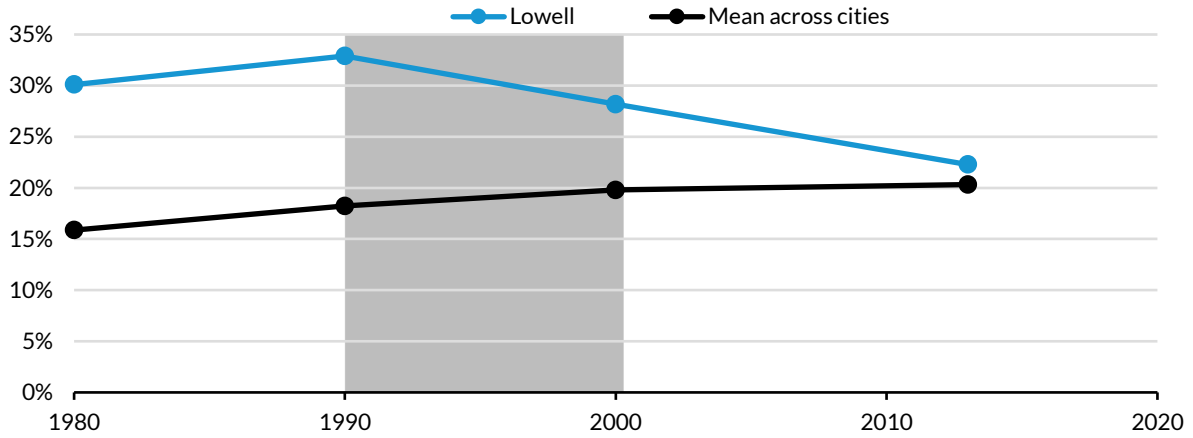
Racial segregation



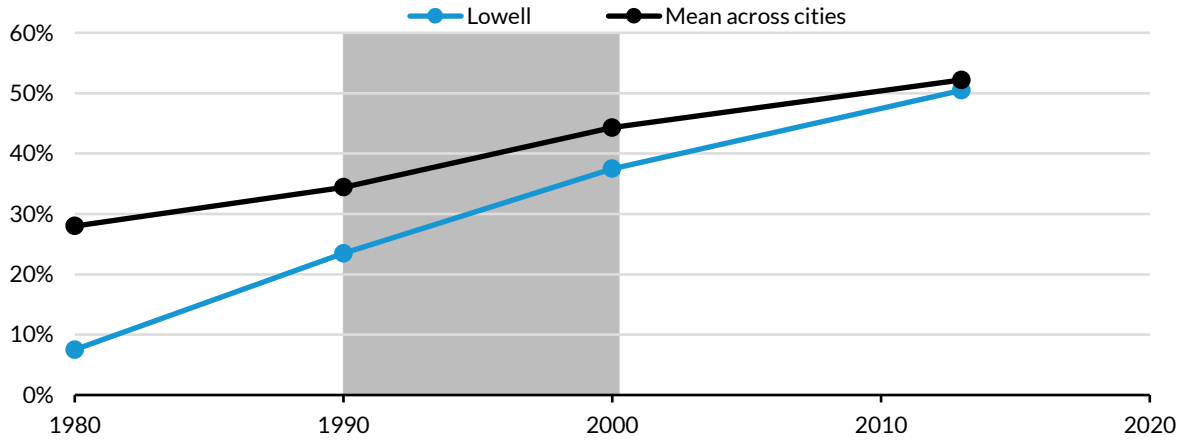
Racial education gap



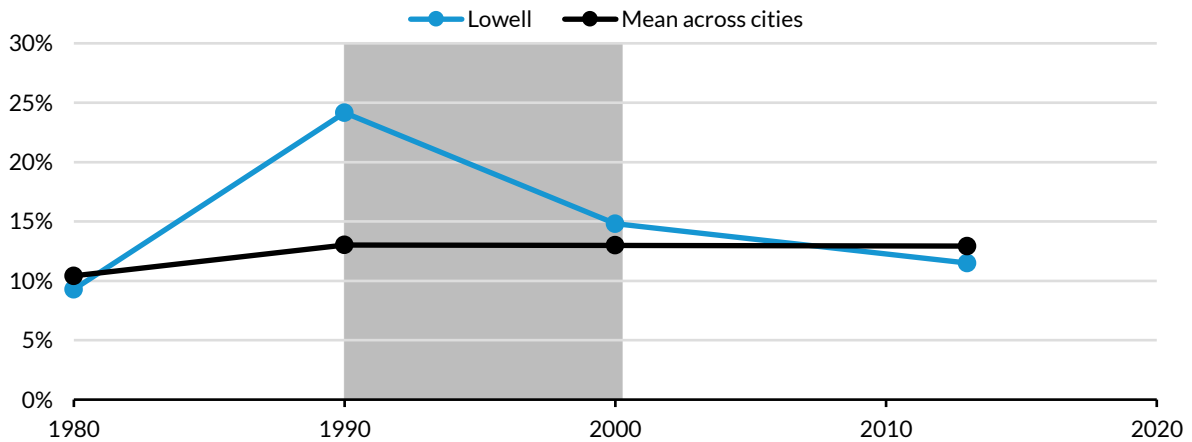
Homeownership gap



Nonwhite percentage



Poverty gap



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

Notably, as the person-of-color population increased, relative residential segregation in Lowell decreased. Though it is possible that the growing number of residents of color could move into already segregated sections of town, potentially increasing segregation, the opposite trend is at work in Lowell. Immigrant incorporation is a key aspect to inclusive recovery here. Both residents and community organizations have worked actively to incorporate immigrants and their descendants into the culture of the city. In the 1990s, the city implemented community policing strategies to make engagement more inclusive and culturally sensitive. In 1997, residents and community activists established the Lowell Southeast Asian Water Festival, which is a cultural festival that honors the traditional water celebrations throughout Southeast Asia. Now, the Water Festival is one of the city's most celebrated annual events and brings tourists from all over to participate in the event.

Instead of segregation, Lowell has excelled in various ways of incorporating both people and culture into the city. However, despite the progress, Cambodians are still not well represented in the city council or throughout city government, which holds citywide elections as opposed to elections by wards or neighborhoods.

The racial homeownership gap in Lowell fell by 19 rankings between 1990 and 2000. Though at the moment, Lowell's homeownership gap was on the higher end of our sample of cities, this change is a sign of progress (which continues on after the period of recovery). In addition to increased employment opportunities in the 1990s, one nonprofit - the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership (MVHP) - worked during this time period to provide home buying training and down payment assistance to first time home buyers. MVHP also partnered with the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Lowell to specialize and target this training to the Cambodian population of Lowell.

Future Outlook

The city of Lowell is working to maintain the progress they made in the 1990s. Lowell maintains a diverse economy, serving as the headquarters for another high-tech equipment manufacturer, with Lowell General Hospital and UMass Lowell serving as other major employers. The city was recently awarded an implementation grant through the Working Cities Challenge, a collaboration between the Boston Fed and Living Cities to help create and maintain economic resurgence through civic infrastructure in mid-sized New England cities. The city has seen some positive, but limited, improvement in ethnic representation. Cambodian politicians represent Lowell at both the city and state level. On January 1st, 2018, Vesna Nuon, a previous Cambodian councilor, was reelected to serve on the City Council.⁹³ Rady Mom was also recently elected to the Massachusetts House of

Representatives, representing the 18th Middlesex District, which covers part of Lowell. Mom is the first Cambodian-American to be elected to the Massachusetts Legislature. Finally, the Lowell Development and Financial Corporation and The Lowell Plan—two organizations influential in the recovery of the 1990s, continue to be active in the city.

Midland, Texas

Midland is a city in and the county seat of Midland County in West Texas. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in the country and, as of 2016, it had a population of over 134,000, up from just over 111,000 in 2010. Its economic revitalization is rooted in the oil and natural gas boom in the Permian Basin. The city's economic success has been tethered to cyclic oil prices in recent decades. The most severe bust in recent memory occurred in 1986 when oil prices dropped by a third and Midland County lost 5 percent of its population. As oil prices rebounded, so did Midland's economy.⁹⁴ In recent years, Midland's Permian Basin oil fields have proven more resourced and resilient post-bust than their neighbors, such as Eagle Ford.⁹⁵

The economic opportunities created by the most recent boom have been broadly shared in Midland—the rising tide of crude oil has “lifted all boats” by sheer force of the market. The unemployment rate in Midland has been among the lowest in the country in recent years and housing and construction are expanding rapidly to meet the demands of the growing labor market. New wealth has led to a rise in philanthropic giving and strengthened private community foundations in the city and region—the number of private foundations and charities in Midland County has grown from 97 in 1990 to 255 in 2013.⁹⁶ The city is governed by a city council (four district members and two at-large members), with a separately elected mayor who serves as the head of the city council. The council appoints a city manager, who is tasked with day-to-day operation of the city.

Data Profile

According to our analysis, Midland experienced an economic recovery between 1990 and 2013 (table C.10–C.13). During this period, it improved its ranking on economic health compared with other cities in our sample through substantial improvements across all four of our economic health indicators. By 2013, it had the lowest unemployment rate of any city in our sample.

Between 1990 and 2013, Midland vaulted 96 rankings in our economic inclusion index and 118 rankings in our racial inclusion index. Midland's improvement in economic inclusion during its recovery

period was driven largely by reduced income segregation (jumping from a ranking of 204 to 65 across our sample). It also maintained a steady share of working families who are poor while the average across our sample increased. As a result, it jumped from being ranked 230 on this indicator in 1990 to 55 by 2013. Midland improved its ranking on the racial inclusion index mostly by significantly narrowing the racial poverty gap. On this measure, the city moved from near the bottom of our sample (ranked 256 out of 274) in 1990 to performing better than average in our sample (ranked 135) by 2013.

FIGURE C.10

Midland Change in Ranking Analysis for Economic Health

	Percent employment change	Median family income	Unemployment rate	Vacancy rate	Economic health index	Δ index during recovery period	Δ overall inclusion index during recovery period
1980	100	32	3	81	28	191	160
1990	146	91	119	268	202		
2000	173	117	85	251	178		
2013	24	37	1	75	11		
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

FIGURE C.11

Midland Change in Ranking Analysis for Economic Inclusion

	Income segregation	Rent burden	Working poor	Share of 16-to-19-year-olds not in school	Economic inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period	
1980	257	41	182	161	174	96	
1990	204	12	230	154	139		
2000	196	32	187	105	103		
2013	65	22	55	159	43		
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

FIGURE C.12

Midland Change in Ranking Analysis for Racial Inclusion

	Racial segregation	Homeowner gap	Poverty gap	Education gap	Percentage of color	Racial inclusion index	Δ index during recovery period
1980	253	49	134	266	123	225	118
1990	196	42	256	267	139	253	
2000	204	36	195	253	150	213	
2013	222	33	49	247	139	135	
Ranking legend	More inclusion						Less inclusion
Change in rank	Greater improvement						Greater decline

Drivers of Inclusive Recovery

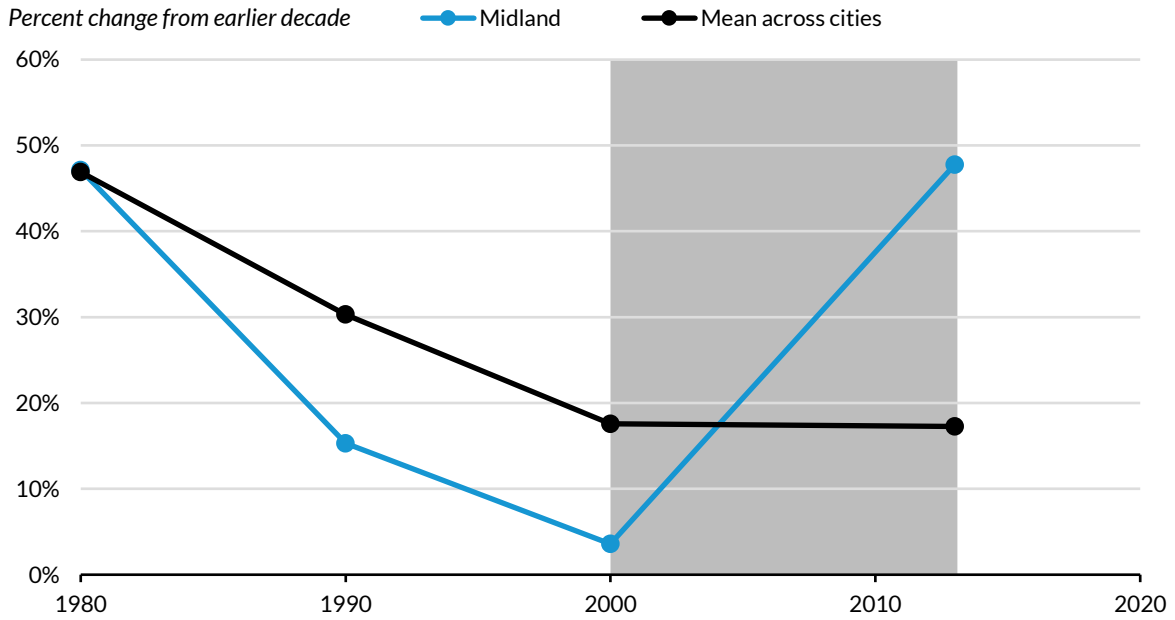
ECONOMIC HEALTH

Midland's economic recovery was driven by the boom in the oil and natural gas industry in the Permian Basin (figure C.10). As new technologies allowed more resources to be extracted from the Permian Basin, Midland's economy skyrocketed. A sharp increase in the number of jobs since 2000 drove unemployment to a national low of 2.4 percent and pulled the city's median family income to over \$80,000 by 2013. Demand for even unskilled labor is so great that an oil field laborer with only a high school degree can earn as much as \$70,000 annually. Service-sector employers, such as restaurants and retail, have in some cases increased wages to \$16/hour and started offering benefits, such as free meals, otherwise unable to retain employees.⁹⁷ Construction companies, meanwhile, have reported significant employee lost to oil-related industry, sometimes to such an extent that up to six months can be added to project completion time.⁹⁸

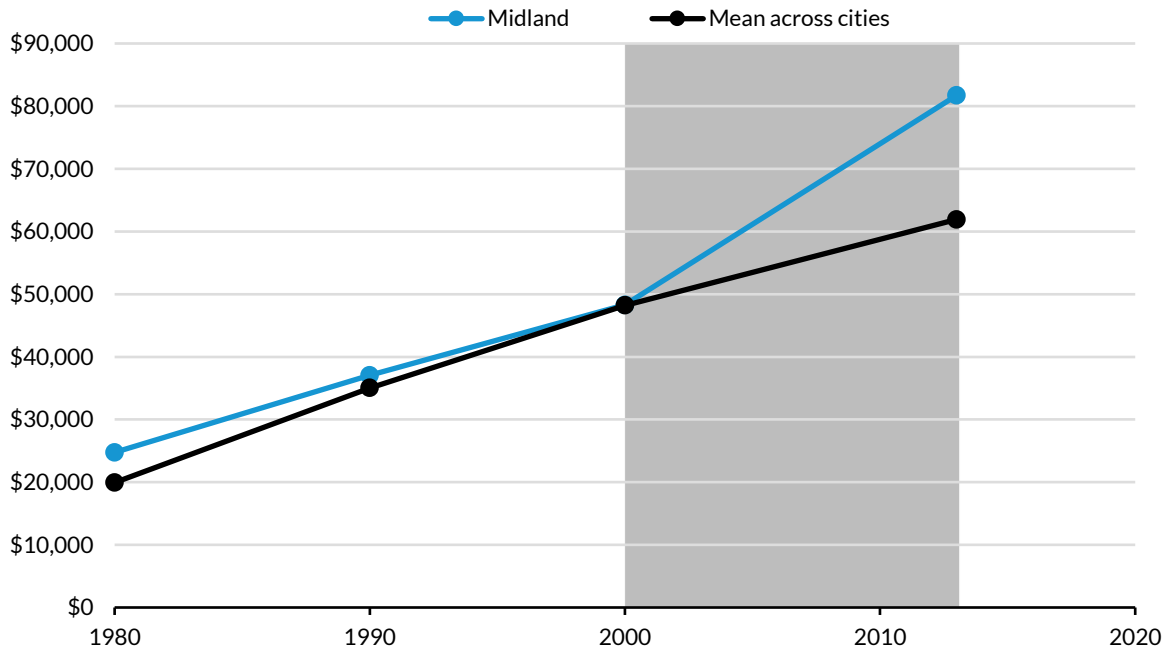
FIGURE C.10

Midland Economic Health Indicators that Drove Recovery

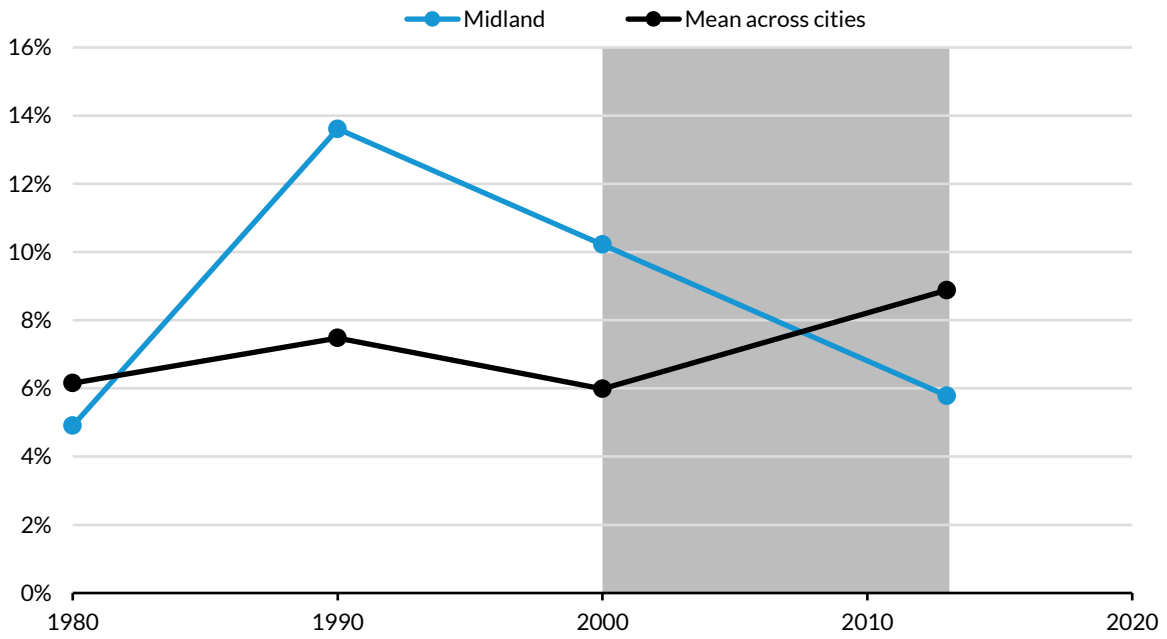
Employment change



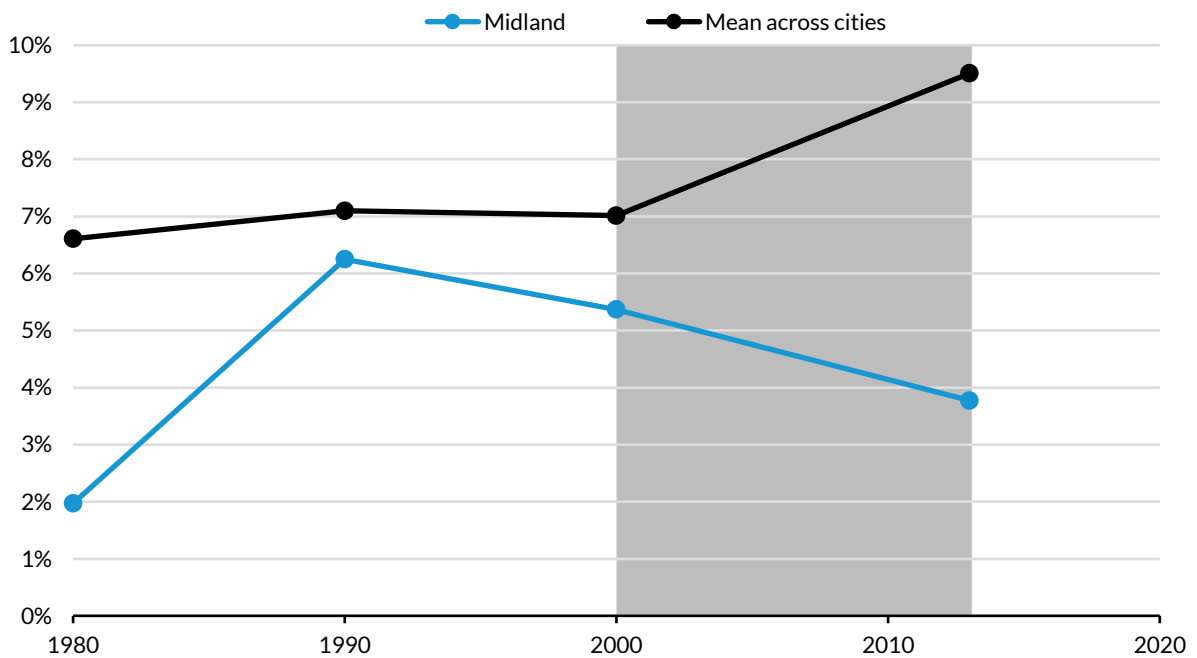
Median family income



Vacancy rate



Unemployment rate



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011–15).

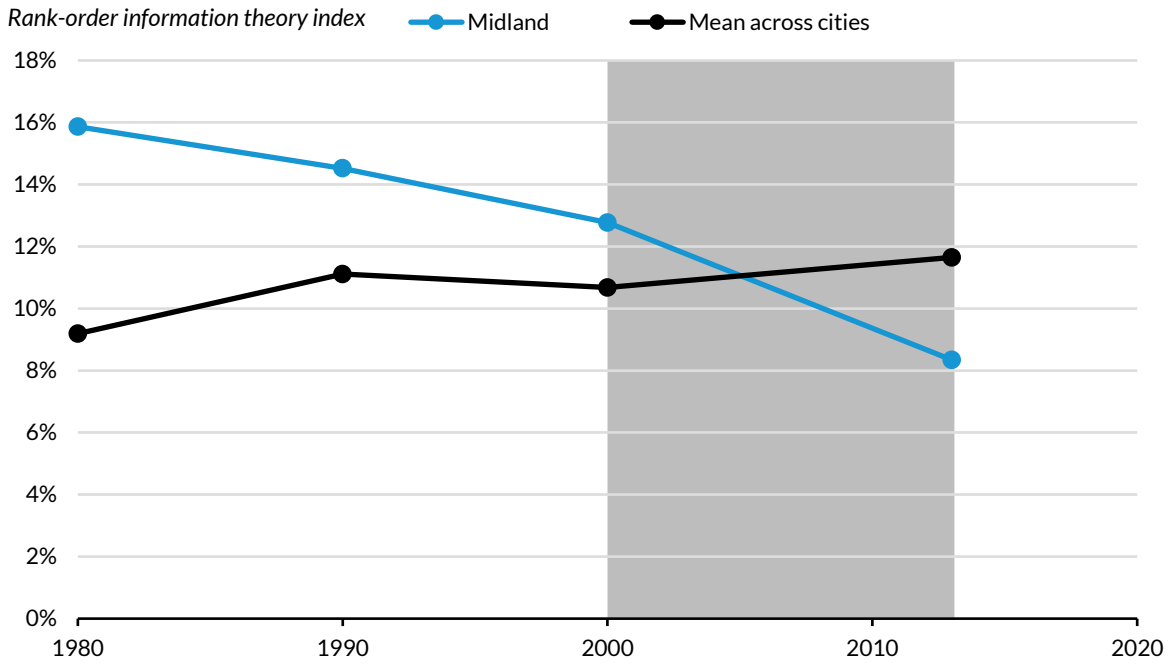
ECONOMIC INCLUSION

The natural resources boom also drove significant improvements in Midland's performance on two of our four economic inclusion indicators between 1990 and 2013: economic segregation and working poor (figure C.11). Declining segregation by income in the city is likely attributable to income growth at the bottom because of the influx of better paying jobs in the industry jobs and tightening labor market. While other cities across our sample witnessed dramatic increases to their share of working people whose incomes fell below the federal poverty level since 2000, Midland's rate held steady thanks similarly to high demand for labor and the upward pressure this placed on wages. The rent burden for Midland households also remained significantly below the average across our sample despite rising market rents in this period—growth in incomes outpaced rent increases and ensured that rent burden rose at a lesser pace than our 274 cities as a whole. Midland lost ground on high-school dropout rates during its recovery period (both in real numbers and ranking) because of the attractiveness of jobs in the oil fields, which paid well but did not require a high school degree. This encouraged many students to drop out of school and enter the workforce.

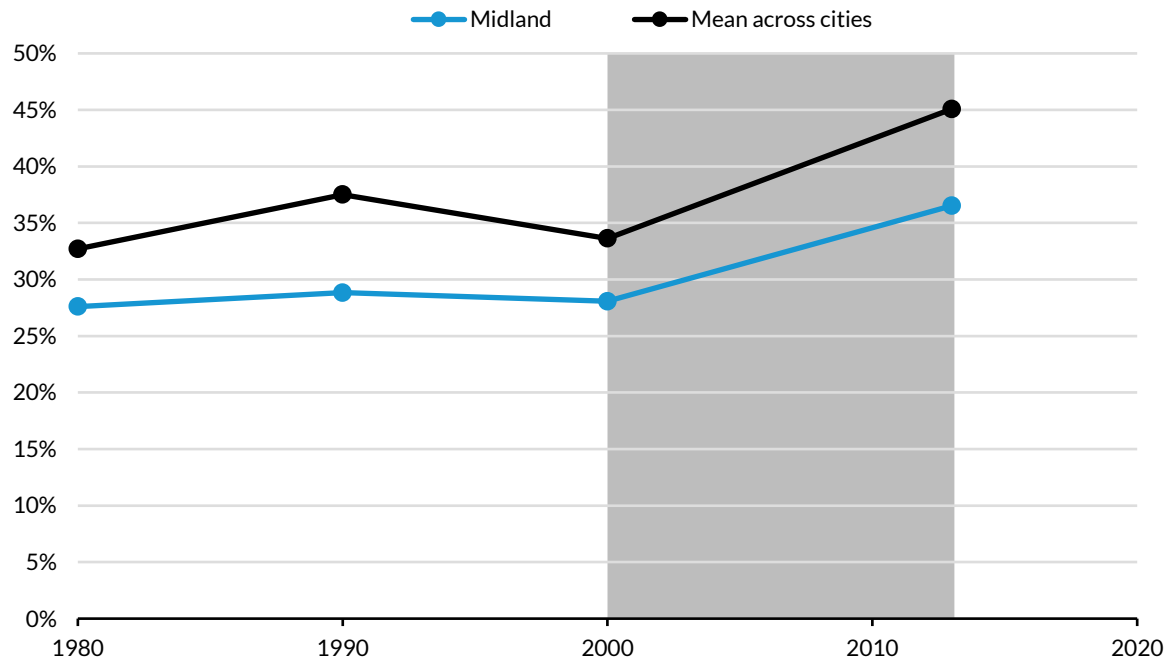
FIGURE C.11

Midland Economic Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion

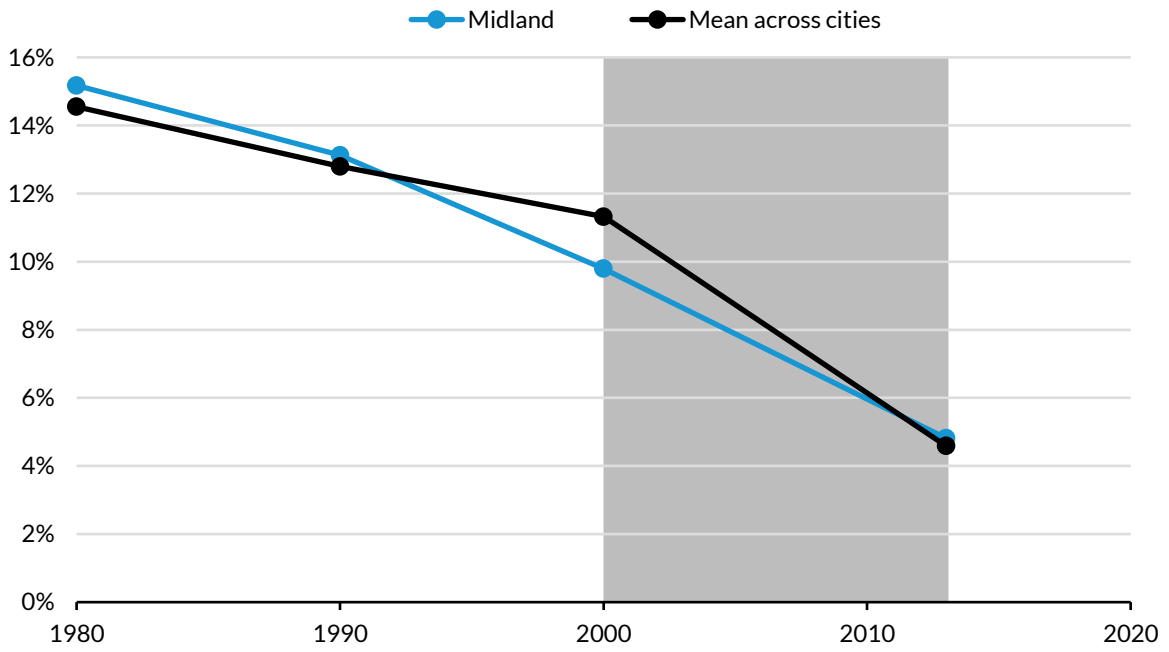
Income segregation



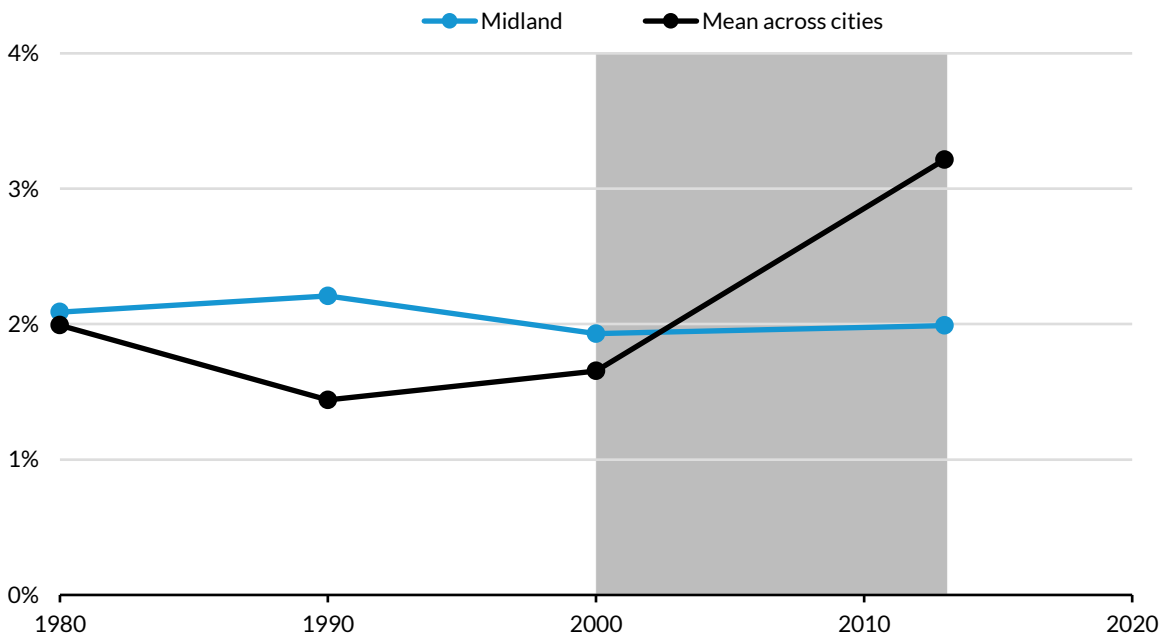
Rent burden



Share of 16- to 19-year-olds not in school



Working poor



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

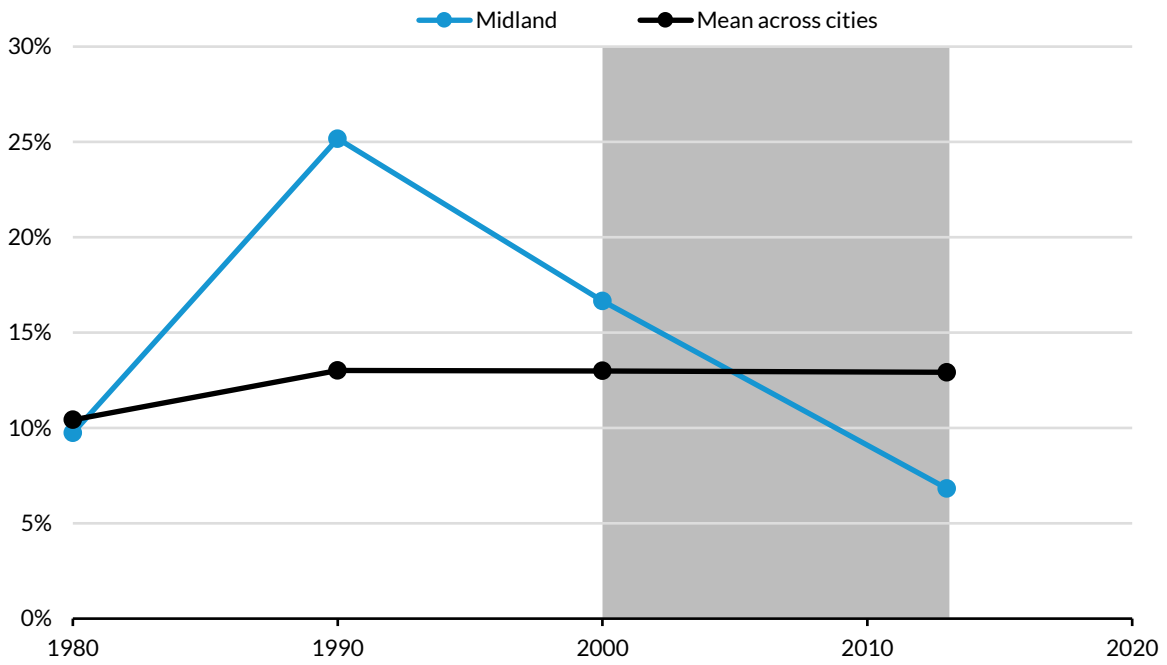
RACIAL INCLUSION

Midland also made gains on our racial inclusion index. Competition among employers led to rising wages and reduced the percentage of people of color living below the poverty level and significantly reduced the racial poverty gap. Midland has also made modest progress in reducing the gap in educational attainment between white people and people of color since 1990, however it remains significantly below the average across our sample on this measure. The University of Texas at the Permian Basin established the Falcon Promise Program in 2009, covering all tuition and mandatory fees of a four-year degree for students from any family making \$45,000 per year or less.⁹⁹ Though this program expanded access to four-year secondary education regardless of income, their effects may yet to show in our data, as the first class receiving this only just graduated in our final year of analysis, 2013. A similar program, started in 1986, pays tuition for any Midland County high school graduate with a GPA above a 2.75 and participates in 40 hours of community service to attend the local community college, Midland College.¹⁰⁰

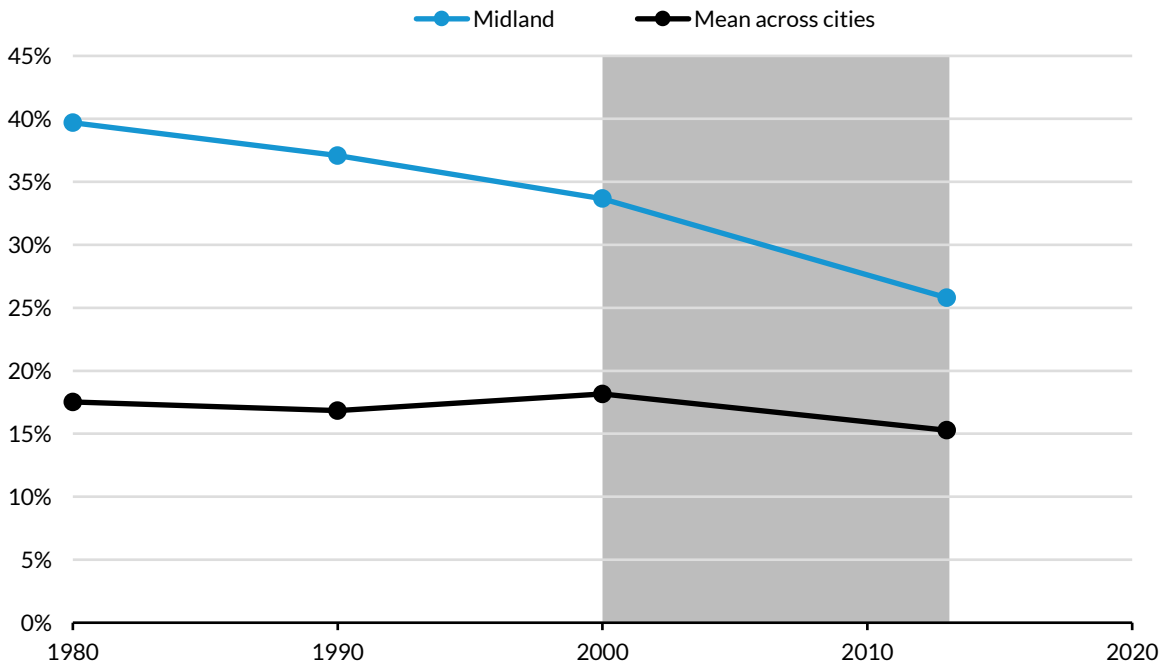
FIGURE C.12

Midland Racial Inclusion Indicators that Drove Inclusion

Poverty gap



Racial education gap



Source: Urban Institute analysis of US Census Bureau data, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, and 2000) and American Community Survey (2011-15).

Future Outlook

Since the discovery of oil in the Permian Basin in 1923, Midland and its surrounding region has experienced economic boom and bust cycles in relation to the global price of oil and natural gas. In fact, just beyond the scope of our data, 2015 saw a troubling near-bust shake the region as oil fell from \$100/barrel to a precipitous \$30/barrel—7 percent of residents lost their jobs as a result (compared with 9 percent of those in nearby Odessa). However, instead of seeing massive population loss and destitution as in past busts, the large labor shortages in other sectors kept down unemployment long enough for oil prices to rebound and the Permian Basin to again drive the region's growth.¹⁰¹

Despite recent resilience, the region must be prepared to buoy itself with a diversified economy in the event of longer-term oil market collapse in the future. Since Midland's improvements on economic and racial inclusion rely on low levels of unemployment and rising wages driven by oil and natural gas extraction, it is vital that Midland take advantage of its prosperity to build resilient and inclusive systems going forward.

Specifically, Midland must grapple with two key issues—education and housing—if it is to sustain progress on racial and economic inclusion. The city's schools are perennially ranked amongst the worst in the state by the Texas Education Agency.¹⁰² In 2016, civic, business, philanthropic, and educational leaders in Midland came together to launch Educate Midland, a collective impact initiative that focuses on improving educational outcomes for all Midland students and attract quality teachers to the city's public schools.¹⁰³ If Midland is able to ensure a strong workforce and ensure that its residents are prepared to weather economic downturns in the future, it will need to continue to reinvest in human capital.

Housing in Midland has also become less affordable in recent years. If population growth continues at the current pace, the cost of housing could price out the regions' low-skilled workers and less economically advantaged. Though homeownership is still relatively affordable with a median home price of \$193,000 in 2017 (rising wages that have somewhat offset higher prices), the rental housing market is precipitous, with average apartment rent increasing nearly 15 percent in the past 6 months alone.¹⁰⁴ Now might be the opportune time for investment in and preservation of affordable housing stock.

Drawing upon its current economic prosperity and strong local foundations, Midland has a window of opportunity to reinvest profits from natural resource extraction in its own future. After achieving large gains in racial and economic inclusion alike without clear design or intention, Midland now has

enormous potential to purposefully build upon these successes and ensure an even brighter future for all residents.

Appendix D. Convening Participants List

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Veronika Zubo
National event director
Governing Magazine

Notes

- ¹ Alan Berube, “City and Metropolitan Income Inequality Data Reveal Ups and Downs through 2016,” Brookings Institution, February 5, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/city-and-metropolitan-income-inequality-data-reveal-ups-and-downs-through-2016/>.
- ² “All-In Cities Policy Toolkit,” PolicyLink, accessed April 5, 2018, <http://allincities.org/toolkit>; Jessica Mendoza, “Taxing the rich: how Seattle leads a ‘go-local’ trend in liberal politics, Christian Science Monitor,” August 2, 2017, <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2017/0802/Taxing-the-rich-how-Seattle-leads-a-go-local-trend-in-liberal-politics>.
- ³ Erika Poethig, Solomon Greene, Christina Stacy, Tanaya Srini, and Brady Meixell, “Measuring Inclusion in America’s Cities,” Urban Institute, April 2018, <https://apps.urban.org/features/inclusion>.
- ⁴ Data were required back to 1970 for the employment growth measure in the economic health index since it captures change over time.
- ⁵ In our analyses we define people of color as any person identifying in US Census Bureau records as black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, other race two or more races, or Hispanic or Latino white. Because of the lack of data in 1980, the number of Hispanic or Latino whites in our racial education gap measure had to be imputed assuming equal distribution as in the overall population for percentage of non-Hispanic or Latino whites in that year.
- ⁶ For similar reasons, we do not include poverty rate in our measure of economic inclusion. A low or declining poverty rate in a city could suggest that very low-income households are either excluded or being displaced from a city.
- ⁷ A census-designated place is an area grouped solely for statistical purposes and not under the purview of a self-governing body. Thus, places such as, Honolulu, HI, are not included in this analysis.
- ⁸ For a full listing of cities and their inclusion scores, see Poethig et al., “Measuring Inclusion in America’s Cities,” <https://apps.urban.org/features/inclusion>.
- ⁹ In assigning cities to a size category, we use the population in any observation year; therefore, cities can move between categories if they gain (or lose) population across years.
- ¹⁰ We define a city’s “recovery period” as spanning from its last period of economic distress to its first period of economic health.
- ¹¹ In our sample, only Denver, Colorado, and Vancouver, Washington, were distressed at some point before 2008, were classified as other in 2008, and moved to healthy by 2013. Both cities also experienced significant improvements in their economic health after 2008, jumping 117 rankings (Denver) and 43 rankings (Vancouver) on our economic health index between 2008 and 2013.
- ¹² Discussion with Ned Hill, March 14, 2017.
- ¹³ Robin Toof, “Lowell City Presentation” Inclusive Recovery in US Cities convening, June 1, 2017.
- ¹⁴ For more information on the Lowell Plan, see <http://www.lowellplan.org/>.
- ¹⁵ Sara Rimer, “Hometown Recalls Paul Tsongas as Hero Who Inspired Renewal and Pride,” *New York Times* January 23, 1997, <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/23/us/hometown-recalls-paul-tsongas-as-hero-who-inspired-renewal-and-pride.html?mcubz=3>.
- ¹⁶ Lucas Sullivan, “Coleman’s 16-Year Legacy as Columbus Mayor,” *Columbus Dispatch* December 27, 2015, <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2015/12/27/a-16-year-legacy.html>.

- ¹⁷ Sullivan, “Coleman’s 16-Year Legacy as Columbus Mayor.”
- ¹⁸ See “Columbus’ Evolution, Decade by Colorful Decade,” *Columbus Dispatch*, February 10, 2012, <http://www.dispatch.com/article/20120209/NEWS/302099726>; see also City of Columbus, 1993.
- ¹⁹ “Columbus Partnership Gains National Reputation,” *Columbus CEO*, June 1, 2015, <http://www.columbusceo.com/content/stories/2015/06/columbus-partnership-gains-national-reputation.html>.
- ²⁰ Discussion with Jerry Abramson, March 23, 2017.
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